

ANNOUNCER: FUNDING FOR
"COUNTRY MUSIC" WAS PROVIDED

BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OF THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY:

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION,
THE SCHWARTZ/REISMAN FOUNDATION,
THE PFEIL FOUNDATION,

DIANE AND HAL BRIERLEY,
JOHN AND CATHERINE DEBS,

THE FULLERTON FAMILY
CHARITABLE FUND,

BY THE PERRY AND DONNA
GOLKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION,

JAY ALIX AND UNA JACKMAN,

MERCEDES T. BASS,

AND FRED AND DONNA SEIGEL

AND BY THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.

[BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS
PLAYBOYS' "NEW SAN ANTONIO
ROSE" PLAYING]

WILLIS:
OH, TEAR IT DOWN, MR. MAN.

TEAR IT DOWN NOW.

MAJOR FUNDING WAS PROVIDED
BY: THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION;

BY THE ARTHUR VINING DAVIS
FOUNDATIONS,

DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING
AMERICA'S FUTURE

THROUGH EDUCATION;

BY BELMONT UNIVERSITY,
WHERE STUDENTS CAN STUDY

MUSIC AND MUSIC BUSINESS
IN THE HEART OF MUSIC CITY;

BY THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICA--
MADE IN TENNESSEE--

TRAVEL INFORMATION
AT TNVACATION.COM;

BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE

AND DAVIDSON COUNTY;

BY ROSALIND P. WALTER;

BY THE CORPORATION
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;

AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU.

THANK YOU.

âa HEADING DOWN SOUTH
TO THE LAND OF THE PINE âa

âa THUMBING MY WAY INTO
NORTH CAROLINE âa

âa STARING UP THE ROAD,
PRAY TO GOD I SEE HEADLIGHTS âa

âa SO, ROCK ME, MAMA,
LIKE A WAGON WHEEL âa

âa ROCK ME, MAMA,
ANY WAY YOU FEEL âa

âa HEY, MAMA, ROCK ME

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

["MULE SKINNER BLUES"
BY DOLLY PARTON PLAYS]

PARTON: âa WELL, GOOD MORNING

âa CAPTAIN

âa GOOD MORNING TO YOU, SIR

âa HEY, HEY

âa YEAH...

MAN: IF YOU LOOK AT IT
OVER THE LAST 90 YEARS NOW,

THAT IT'S BEEN BEING RECORDED,
IT WOULDN'T BE ONE THING.

IT WOULDN'T BE ANY--
ANYWHERE CLOSE TO ONE THING.

IT'S BEEN
A MILLION DIFFERENT THINGS
IN A MILLION DIFFERENT WAYS.

AND THAT'S, TO ME,
THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY
IT DIFFERENTLY.

YOUR HEART'S GOING
TO MAKE IT COME OUT OF YOU

IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN
IT IS ME.

THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT.

PARTON: âa WELL, I'M A LADY
MULE SKINNER âa

[APPLAUSE]

âa FROM DOWN OLD TENNESSEE WAY

âa HEY, HEY

âa I COME FROM TENNESSEE

âa AND I CAN MAKE
ANY MULE LISTEN âa

âa OR I WON'T ACCEPT YOUR PAY

âa HEY, HEY

âa I WON'T TAKE YOUR PAY

âa YODEL-A-HEE...

I DON'T THINK
I WOULD ENJOY COUNTRY MUSIC

IF IT STAYED THE SAME.

IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO.

PARTON: âa ...A-HEE

âa HEE-HEE

âa HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE

â MULE SKINNER BLUES

[WHISTLES]

HYAH! HYAH...

["ON THE ROAD AGAIN"
BY WILLIE NELSON PLAYS]

NELSON: â ON THE ROAD AGAIN,
JUST CAN'T WAIT... â

NARRATOR: IN THE EARLY 1980s,

THE MAINSTREAM APPEAL OF
THE SMOOTH COUNTRYPOLITAN SOUND,

ALONG WITH A SPATE
OF POPULAR HOLLYWOOD MOVIES,

HAD HELPED IGNITE
A BOOM IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

BUT BY 1984, ACTUAL SALES
OF COUNTRY MUSIC RECORDS

HAD DECREASED BY MORE THAN 27%.

"THOSE GOOD TIMES ARE GONE,"
THE "NEW YORK TIMES" DECLARED,

"AND THEY WON'T BE COMING BACK."

NO SOONER HAD THE DIP
IN COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

BEEN NOTICED AND MOURNED

THAN IT BEGAN REVERSING ITSELF.

TWO NEW CABLE NETWORKS DEDICATED
EXCLUSIVELY TO COUNTRY MUSIC

BROUGHT INTERVIEWS AND STORIES
ABOUT A NEW GENERATION OF STARS

TO FANS ACROSS THE NATION,

USING MUSIC VIDEOS
TO PROMOTE THEIR NEW SONGS.

IN THE LAST HALF OF THE 1980s,

SALES WOULD DOUBLE
AND NEVER LOOK BACK.

BUT WITHIN THE BROAD EMBRACE
OF ITS EXTENDED FAMILY,

THE AGE-OLD QUESTION OF WHAT
IS AND WHAT ISN'T COUNTRY MUSIC

WOULD ONLY INTENSIFY.

COULD A MUSIC
OF EVERYDAY PEOPLE,

DESCRIBED
AS 3 CHORDS AND THE TRUTH,

SURVIVE THE CHANGES
OF THE LATE 20th CENTURY

WITH ITS SOUL
AND ITS SIMPLICITY INTACT?

WOULD ITS STARS AND THE MUSIC
ITSELF LOSE THEIR WAY,

OR WOULD THEY HEED
THE OLD SAYING

"DON'T GET ABOVE YOUR RAISIN"?

MAN: "DON'T GET ABOVE
YOUR RAISIN" IS A TERM

I ASSOCIATE WITH THE SOUTH.

IT'S THE KIND OF ADVICE

THAT PARENTS WOULD
GIVE THEIR CHILDREN.

"BUT AS YOU GO INTO THE WORLD,

"DON'T FORGET
WHERE YOU CAME FROM.

"DON'T GET SO UPPITY
THAT YOU FORGET US

AND YOU FORGET THE VALUES
THAT YOU WERE TAUGHT BACK HOME."

AND I THINK FOR COUNTRY MUSIC,
IT'S JUST A REMINDER

TO THE MUSIC IN GENERAL, "DON'T
FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM."

NARRATOR:
TWO TALENTED BLUEGRASS PICKERS

WOULD HELP LEAD
COUNTRY'S REVIVAL.

ONE WOULD ADD DRUMS
AND ELECTRIC GUITARS

TO THE TRADITIONAL STRING BAND
AND SOMEHOW

MAKE THE FATHER OF BLUEGRASS
HAPPY WITH THE RESULT.

THE OTHER, A GIFTED GUITARIST

WITH HIS OWN
HIGH LONESOME VOICE,

WOULD BRING A SWEET
AUTHENTICITY TO THE MUSIC

THAT ENDEARED HIM
TO OLD AND NEW FANS ALIKE.

A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER
FROM THE BACKWOODS OF KENTUCKY

WOULD STRUGGLE TO TRANSCEND
THEIR COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP,

MESMERIZING AUDIENCES WITH THEIR
ASTONISHING HARMONIES.

A SPIRITED COWGIRL
FROM OKLAHOMA,

WITH A POWERFUL,
UNMISTAKABLE VOICE

WOULD COME TO SPEAK
FOR WOMEN EVERYWHERE

WHILE IN CALIFORNIA,
A YOUNG SINGER-SONGWRITER

WOULD PROUDLY DECLARE HIMSELF
A HILLBILLY

AS HE WALKED THE STREETS
OF BAKERSFIELD.

AND IN NASHVILLE,
ANOTHER SINGER-SONGWRITER

WOULD EMERGE
FROM AN INTIMATE CAFE

THAT SPECIALIZED IN GIVING
UNKNOWNNS A FAIR HEARING

TO BECOME COUNTRY MUSIC'S
BEST-SELLING ARTIST.

HEY!

PARTON: WE ARE ALL RELATED

WHEN IT COMES TO COUNTRY MUSIC
AND TO COUNTRY SONGS.

YOU KNOW, WE'RE LIKE BLOOD KIN.

YOU KNOW, ANYBODY
THAT LOVES COUNTRY MUSIC,

THEY'RE RELATED TO YOU.

YOU'VE GOT THAT IN COMMON.

RICKY SKAGGS: "YOU'RE
A COUNTRY BABY"

"THAT'S PLAIN TO SEE

"DON'T GET ABOVE YOUR RAISIN'

"STAY DOWN TO EARTH WITH ME

["I STILL MISS SOMEONE"
BY JOHNNY CASH PLAYS]

JOHNNY CASH: GET TO HAVE
A SMOKE WITH A.P.

I NEVER GOT TO HAVE A SMOKE
WITH A.P. BEFORE.

HE DIED IN 1960,
AND I NEVER GOT TO KNOW HIM.

NOT REALLY.

I NEVER GOT TO HAVE
A SMOKE WITH HIM.

CAN I HAVE
YOUR AUTOGRAPH?

YES, MA'AM.

IT IS BEAUTIFUL...

NARRATOR: BY THE MID-1980s,

JOHNNY CASH WAS ABOUT TO START

HIS FOURTH DECADE
IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

TO MANY PEOPLE AROUND
THE WORLD, HE WAS COUNTRY MUSIC,

BUT HIS SOLO RECORDS
WERE NO LONGER SELLING.

ONLY TWO SINGLES HAD REACHED THE
TOP 10 IN MORE THAN A DECADE.

JOHNNY CASH: "SOMEWHERE,
AND I STILL..."

NARRATOR: MANY OF HIS RECENT
ALBUMS FAILED TO CHART AT ALL.

IN 1986, COLUMBIA RECORDS
ABRUPTLY DROPPED CASH

FROM ITS ROSTER.

HE HAD BEEN WITH THE LABEL
SINCE 1958.

NO ONE, INCLUDING CASH,
SAW IT COMING.

MAN: IT WAS LIKE SOMEBODY

HAD DROPPED AN ATOM BOMB
IN NASHVILLE.

THE GUY THAT RAN COLUMBIA
AT THE TIME, RICK BLACKBURN,

EVERYBODY THOUGHT
THAT HE WAS THE DEVIL.

BECAUSE JOHNNY CASH WAS
MORE THAN AN ARTIST.

HE WAS A WAY OF LIFE
FOR AMERICA.

MAN: IT WAS
REGRETTABLE AND REPREHENSIBLE

THAT HE WAS JUST KIND OF

SUMMARILY, DISRESPECTFULLY
DISMISSED AND CAST ASIDE

BY A LABEL THAT HAD MADE

MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS
WITH JOHNNY CASH'S MUSIC.

THE FACT THAT COLUMBIA RECORDS
WOULD DROP JOHNNY CASH WAS

AN INSULT TO ANYBODY WHO
HAD EVER LISTENED TO MUSIC.

["I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DON'T
WANT ME" BY ROSANNE CASH PLAYS]

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE,
CASH'S ELDEST DAUGHTER, ROSANNE,

WAS CARVING OUT
HER OWN CAREER IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

SHE CARRIED PAINFUL MEMORIES
OF HER FATHER'S NEGLECT

IN THE 1960s,

WHEN HE WAS STRUNG OUT
ON DRUGS AND NEVER AT HOME.

ROSANNE CASH: "I DON'T KNOW
WHY YOU DON'T WANT ME..."

NARRATOR: BUT SHE ALSO SHARED
HIS DEEP LOVE OF MUSIC

AND HIS FIERCE INDIVIDUALISM.

ROSANNE CASH:
IT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO ME

THAT I DO IT ON MY OWN.

EVEN THOUGHT
OF CHANGING MY NAME,

AND MY DAD DIDN'T
SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.

HE KNEW I WAS CONSIDERING THAT.

AND THEN WHEN I DIDN'T,
HE SAID,

"I'M SO HAPPY THAT YOU
KEPT YOUR NAME," YOU KNOW?

"I'M SO PROUD OF OUR NAME.

I'M SO HAPPY YOU DIDN'T

GIVE IT UP."

AND I REALIZE THAT
WOULD HAVE HURT HIM TERRIBLY.

NARRATOR: SHE AND HER HUSBAND,
RODNEY CROWELL,

WHO WAS ALSO HER PRODUCER,

HAD MOVED FROM LOS ANGELES
TO NASHVILLE,

WHERE SHE HAD TROUBLE
FITTING IN.

ROSANNE CASH: WHEN I MOVED
TO NASHVILLE, I HAD PURPLE HAIR.

I WAS A LITTLE BIT
STREETWISE, URBAN GIRL,

STRAIGHT FROM LOS ANGELES,

AND, YOU KNOW, BRAZEN.

JUST CAME ON THE SCENE,
LIKE, "WELL, HERE I AM,"

AND, "THIS IS GREAT."

AND I REALLY PUT PEOPLE OFF.

NARRATOR: BUT HER SONG "I DON'T
KNOW WHY YOU DON'T WANT ME"

WENT TO NUMBER ONE
AND WON A GRAMMY.

ROSANNE CASH: "I DON'T KNOW
WHY YOU DON'T WANT ME..."

"I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU..."

MAN: SHE WAS SELLING RECORDS.

AND THE PEOPLE
WERE GETTING HER MUSIC.

AND THAT WILL ENDEAR YOU TO
THE ESTABLISHMENT PRETTY QUICK

BECAUSE IT ADDS
TO THE BOTTOM LINE.

SO YOU'D BE SURPRISED
AT HOW MUCH RESPECT YOU GET

WHEN YOUR RECORDS ARE SELLING.

AND YOU PROBABLY
WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED

HOW LITTLE YOU GET
WHEN THEY'RE NOT.

["TENNESSEE FLAT TOP BOX"
BY ROSANNE CASH PLAYS]

NARRATOR: ROSANNE CASH'S
NEWEST ALBUM WENT GOLD

AND PRODUCED 4
CONSECUTIVE NUMBER ONE SINGLES,

INCLUDING
"TENNESSEE FLAT TOP BOX,"

A SONG HER FATHER
HAD FIRST RECORDED IN 1961.

ROSANNE CASH: "A ...A LITTLE
DARK-HAIRED BOY "

" WHO PLAYED THE TENNESSEE
FLAT TOP BOX... "

I FELT KIND
OF GUILTY THAT MY CAREER WAS

REALLY—I WAS GETTING—

HAVING A LOT OF
NUMBER ONE RECORDS

AND GETTING A LOT
OF ATTENTION

AT THE SAME TIME MY DAD
WAS DROPPED FROM COLUMBIA

AND HE WAS REALLY FLOUNDERING.

I FELT BAD FOR HIM BECAUSE
HE PUT A LOT OF STOCK

IN BEING JOHNNY CASH.

AND TO NOT HAVE THAT, HE WAS
A LITTLE DISCONCERTED

AND AT SEA AND DEPRESSED.

["MY LONG JOURNEY HOME" BY

THE MONROE BROTHERS PLAYS]

MONROE BROTHERS:
"DARK AND A-RAININ'

" AND I GOT TO GO HOME

" GOT TO GO HOME, OH, WE GOT
TO GO HOME "

" DARK AND A-RAININ'

" AND I GOT TO GO HOME

" I'M ON MY LONG JOURNEY HOME

IN ALL THINGS COUNTRY MUSIC,
WE SEE A RESPONSE.

HOW FAR ARE THEY GOING
TO TAKE COUNTRY MUSIC?

WELL, IT'LL
COME BACK AROUND AGAIN.

IT'S ALWAYS REMINDING
ITSELF WHO IT IS.

AND THE OLD GHOSTS
ARE ALWAYS RISING UP

AND REFUSING TO BE CAST ASIDE.

MONROE BROTHERS:
" GOT TO GO HOME

" OH, WE GOT TO GO HOME

" IT'S DARK AND A-RAININ',
AND I GOT TO GO HOME "

" I'M ON MY LONG JOURNEY HOME

THERE IS A TENSION, ALWAYS.

I THINK, YOU KNOW, IT'S HOW
BIG CAN YOU MAKE YOUR AUDIENCE,

YOU KNOW, AND HOW PURE
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR HEART.

I THINK THE WAY
COUNTRY MUSIC WAS PUFFED UP

AND SO HUNG UP ON ITSELF
AND ITS SOUND AND ITS CITY

AND ITS IMAGE,
AND ALL THAT, YOU KNOW?

I THINK MAYBE IT WAS
A LITTLE PRIDEFUL,

AND WE NEED
TO HAVE A HEART CHECK.

["HIGHWAY 40 BLUES" BY
RICKY SKAGGS PLAYS]

NARRATOR: RICKY SKAGGS
WAS FROM EASTERN KENTUCKY.

A PRODIGY ON THE MANDOLIN,
HE HAD PLAYED FOR BILL MONROE

AT AGE 6,

APPEARED ON THE FLATT
AND SCRUGGS TELEVISION SHOW

WHEN HE WAS 7;

AND AS A TEENAGER JOINED

RALPH STANLEY
AND THE CLINCH MOUNTAIN BOYS.

NO ONE HAD MORE
IMPECCABLE BLUEGRASS CREDENTIALS

THAN HE DID.

SKAGGS: "SQUANDERED
YOUTH IN SEARCH OF TRUTH"

"BUT IN THE END, I HAD TO LOSE,
GOT THE HIGHWAY 40 BLUES..."

NARRATOR: BUT IN THE LATE 1970s,
SKAGGS HAD MOVED TO LOS ANGELES

TO BE PART OF
EMMYLOU HARRIS' HOT BAND,

INFUSING HER MUSIC
WITH A TINGE OF BLUEGRASS,

AND EXPERIMENTING
WITH A SOUND THAT COMBINED

THE ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS
OF A STRING BAND

WITH SOMETHING MORE ELECTRIC,

MORE HONKY TONK.

IT WAS TRADITIONAL,
AND IT WAS BRAND-NEW.

SKAGGS: WELL,
THE BLUEGRASS PURISTS WERE,

THEY DIDN'T LIKE
THE ELECTRIC PART.

THEY REALLY DIDN'T.

AND IT WAS SO COUNTRY.
I MEAN, IT WAS BARNYARD.

YOU COULD SMELL IT.
IT WAS SO COUNTRY.

NARRATOR:
SKAGGS ENJOYED NOTHING BETTER

THAN TAKING A SONG THAT ONE OF
HIS BLUEGRASS HEROES HAD WRITTEN

AND RECORDED
A GENERATION EARLIER

AND INJECTING IT
WITH SOMETHING FRESH.

[STRUMMING MANDOLIN]

SKAGGS: "WELL, I GOT A GAL
THAT'S SWEET TO ME "

" SHE JUST AIN'T
WHAT SHE USED TO BE "

" JUST A LITTLE HIGH HEADED

" THAT'S PLAIN TO SEE

" DON'T GET ABOVE YOUR RAISIN'

" STAY DOWN TO EARTH WITH ME

THAT IS JUST A BAD SONG! THAT
IS SO BAD. I LOVE THAT SONG.

THAT WAS
A FLATT AND SCRUGGS SONG

THAT EARL JUST ATE
THE BANJO UP ON.

I FELT LIKE THAT SONG COULD BE

A SLAMMING KIND OF COUNTRY SONG.

â OH, WELL, I GOT
A GAL THAT'S SWEET TO ME â

â AND SHE JUST AIN'T
WHAT SHE USED TO BE â

â SHE'S JUST
A LITTLE HIGH HEADED â

â THAT'S PLAIN TO SEE

â DON'T GET ABOVE YOUR RAISIN'

â STAY DOWN TO EARTH WITH ME

â "NOW, LOOKIE HERE, GAL,"
THEN SHE HIGH-HATTED ME â

â I AIN'T FORGOT WHAT YOU
USED TO BE... â

SKAGGS, VOICE-OVER: YOU KNOW,
THE SCRIPTURES TELL US,

YOU KNOW, BE HUMBLE.

YOU KNOW, GOD DOESN'T
EXALT PRIDE, BUDDY.

HE EXALTS HUMILITY.

â STAY DOWN TO EARTH WITH ME

â

["UNCLE PEN"
BY RICKY SKAGGS PLAYS]

NARRATOR: DURING THE MID-1980s,

SKAGGS RELEASED A STEADY
STRING OF TOP HITS,

INCLUDING A REMAKE OF A SONG
HIS MENTOR, BILL MONROE,

HAD WRITTEN BACK IN 1950 ABOUT
MONROE'S MENTOR, UNCLE PEN.

MONROE'S VERSION
HAD NEVER CHARTED;

SKAGGS' JUMPED TO NUMBER ONE.

SKAGGS: â UNCLE PEN PLAYED

THE FIDDLE, LORD, HOW IT RANG

YOU COULD HEAR IT TALK,
YOU COULD HEAR IT SING...

SKAGGS: "UNCLE PEN" WAS
THE FIRST SOLO BLUEGRASS SONG

TO EVER REACH NUMBER ONE.

SO I WAS AT THE OPRY ONE NIGHT,

AND MR. MONROE CAME UP TO ME,
AND HE SAID,

"UH, RICKY, UH, BOY, UH,
I JUST GOT A POWERFUL CHECK

ON THAT SONG 'UNCLE PEN,'
THAT SONG YOU PUT OUT."

AND HE SAID, "I'M TELLING YOU,
IT WAS A POWERFUL CHECK NOW."

HE SAID, "I PAID ALL MY
LAND TAXES," AND HE SAID,

"I GOT SOME LEFT OVER."

AND, UH, "YOU CAN RECORD
ALL MY SONGS IF YOU WANT TO."

UNCLE PEN?

NARRATOR:
MONROE EVEN AGREED TO APPEAR

IN A MUSIC VIDEO FOR SKAGGS'
SONG "COUNTRY BOY,"

PRETENDING TO BE UNCLE PEN

PAYING A VISIT TO HIS
NEPHEW IN NEW YORK CITY.

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW
YOU'D SINK TO THIS.

SON, YOU'RE GETTING
WAY ABOVE YOUR RAISIN'

IS WHAT'S GOING ON.

AND IT'S
A SAD SIGHT.

WELL, UNCLE PEN,

I'LL SHOW YOU.

SKAGGS, VOICE-OVER:
HE PLAYED THE ROLE SO GREAT.

AND WHEN HE CHEWED ME OUT
IN THAT LAWYER'S ROOM

FOR BEING ALL DRESSED UP AND
KIND OF GOT ABOVE MY RAISIN',

YOU KNOW, A LITTLE BIT,
HE DID IT SO PERFECT.

â I MAY LOOK LIKE
A CITY SLICKER â

â SHININ' UP
THROUGH ME SHOES â

â UNDERNEATH I'M JUST
A COTTON PICKER â

â PICKIN' OUT
A MESS OF BLUES... â

SKAGGS, VOICE-OVER:
IT HAD ALL THE ELEMENTS OF FUN.

IT HAD BREAK DANCING.

IT HAD ED KOCH EATING A BAGEL,

SINGING "I'M JUST
A COUNTRY BOY AT HEART."

SKAGGS: â I'M
JUST A COUNTRY BOY â

â COUNTRY BOY AT HEART

â

SKAGGS: WELL, WHAT
DO YOU THINK, UNCLE PEN?

MONROE: I GUESS YOU'RE
STILL A COUNTRY BOY.

["AMARILLO BY MORNING"
BY GEORGE STRAIT PLAYS]

NARRATOR: BUT THERE
WERE OTHER YOUNG ARTISTS

WHO WERE ALSO RECONNECTING
COUNTRY MUSIC WITH ITS ROOTS

AND HAVING GREAT SUCCESS.

GEORGE STRAIT
WAS RAISED ON A RANCH

NEAR HIS BIRTHPLACE OF
POTEET, TEXAS.

HIS MUSIC HAD AN OLD-FASHIONED
DANCE HALL FEEL TO IT,

ANCHORED BY HIS SMOOTH, EASY
VOICE AND NO-FRILLS APPROACH.

â AMARILLO BY MORNING

â UP FROM SAN ANTONE

â EVERYTHING THAT I GOT

â IS JUST WHAT
I'VE GOT ON... â

GARTH BROOKS: I WAS GOING
TO THE STORE WITH MY DAD,

AND I REMEMBER COMING OUT
OF TURTLE CREEK,

UP THERE WHERE I WAS GOING TO
TAKE A LEFT BY THE BLUE CHURCH,

HEADING NORTH TO SNYDER'S IGA.

AND DAD HAD THIS RADIO ON,
KIND OF A.M.

AND THIS LADY SAID,
"HERE'S A NEW KID FROM TEXAS,

AND I THINK YOU'RE GOING
TO LIKE HIS SOUND."

AND IT WAS GEORGE STRAIT.

STRAIT: â THEY TOOK
MY SADDLE IN HOUSTON â

â BROKE MY LEG IN SANTA FE...

BROOKS: AND IT WAS
THAT DAY, I LOOKED AND SAID,

"THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO BE."

STRAIT: â LOST MY WIFE

AND A GIRLFRIEND â

â SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY

â BUT I'LL BE LOOKIN' FOR 8

â WHEN THEY PULL THAT GATE

â AND I HOPE THAT
JUDGE AIN'T BLIND â

â AMARILLO BY MORNING

â AMARILLO'S
ON MY MIND... â

NARRATOR: STRAIT'S FIRST ALBUM
SOLD A MILLION COPIES.

SO DID
EVERY OTHER ALBUM HE RELEASED

FOR THE REST OF THE CENTURY.

HE WOULD ULTIMATELY RECORD
60 NUMBER ONE SINGLES--

MORE THAN ANY OTHER ARTIST
IN ANY MUSICAL CATEGORY.

[APPLAUSE]

["DIGGIN' UP BONES"
BY RANDY TRAVIS PLAYS]

RANDY TRAVIS: â LAST NIGHT
I DUG YOUR PICTURE â

â OUT FROM OUR OLD
DRESSER DRAWER â

â SET IT ON THE TABLE

â I READ SOME
OLD LOVE LETTERS... â

NARRATOR:
IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA,

RANDY TRAVIS BARELY SURVIVED
A TROUBLED YOUTH--

DRUGS, ALCOHOL,
SCRAPES WITH THE POLICE.

THEN "LIB" HATCHER,
THE MANAGER OF A LOCAL CLUB

WHERE HE WAS SINGING,

INTERVENED
AND PROMISED AUTHORITIES

SHE WOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR KEEPING HIM OUT OF TROUBLE.

HATCHER BROUGHT HIM
TO NASHVILLE, WHERE PRODUCERS

ADMIRE HIS DEEP BARITONE VOICE,

BUT THOUGHT IT HAD
TOO MUCH TWANG IN IT

AND UNIFORMLY TURNED HIM DOWN.

FINALLY, IN 1986,
ONE LABEL RELENTED,

AND TO EVERYONE'S SURPRISE,

HIS DEBUT ALBUM ENDED UP
SELLING 3 MILLION COPIES.

TRAVIS: " ...BETTER LEFT ALONE

" I'M RESURRECTING MEMORIES OF
A LOVE THAT'S DEAD AND GONE "

" YEAH, TONIGHT I'M SITTIN'
ALONE, DIGGIN' UP BONES "

WOMAN: HE WAS THE FIRST GUY

TO SORT OF GO RIGHT BACK
TO THIS HEART OF THINGS,

AND UNAPOLOGETICALLY
WITH GREAT SONGS,

JUST GREAT SONGS
AND A GREAT VOICE

AND THE SIMPLICITY OF THAT.

TRAVIS: " ...THAT I BOUGHT YOU
TO WEAR... "

I JUST REMEMBER
THE KIND OF WHIPLASH FEELING

WHEN HE CAME ALONG, THAT KIND
OF LIKE,

EVERYBODY WAS LIKE,
"THAT GUY."

TRAVIS: "I'M SITTIN'
ALONE, DIGGIN' UP BONES"

[SONG ENDS]

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

["DADDY"
BY REBA McENTIRE PLAYS]

McENTIRE:
"MY DADDY IS A RANCHER

" HE'S WRANGLLED CATTLE DANG NEAR
ALL HIS LIFE... "

MY ACCENT
HAS BEEN WITH ME FOREVER.

BECAUSE THE WAY I TALK
AND THE WAY I SING,

I CAN'T CROSS OVER THAT MUCH.

UM, IT'S A BIG OLD BAR
THAT COMES UP.

THE BARRIERS DO COME UP.

NARRATOR: REBA McENTIRE GREW UP

ON AN 8,000-ACRE CATTLE RANCH
NEAR KIOWA, OKLAHOMA.

HER FATHER, A 3-TIME
WORLD-CHAMPION CALF ROPER,

TAUGHT HIS 4 CHILDREN
TO WORK HARD AND LOVE HORSES.

HER MOTHER TAUGHT THEM TO
HARMONIZE AND LOVE MUSIC.

BY HIGH SCHOOL,
REBA WAS PERFORMING

WITH A BROTHER AND SISTER
AS THE SINGING McENTIRES,

AND COMPETING IN RODEOS
AS A BARREL RACER.

" O, SAY, DOES THAT
STAR-SPANGLED BANNER "

â YET WAVE...

NARRATOR: WHEN SHE SANG
THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

AT THE NATIONAL FINALS RODEO
IN 1974,

HER VOICE PROMPTED
AN INVITATION TO NASHVILLE,

WHERE SHE SIGNED
A RECORDING CONTRACT

AND RELEASED SEVERAL ALBUMS.

BUT AS THE YEARS WENT BY, SHE
GREW DISSATISFIED WITH THE WAY

HER LABEL TRIED TO MOLD HER INTO
A COUNTRYPOLITAN-STYLE ARTIST.

OF COURSE, ME BEING
A STRONG-WILLED THIRD CHILD

OUT OF 4 KIDS AND A REDHEAD,

AND I HAD MY OWN OPINION
OF HOW THINGS WOULD BE DONE.

["SOMEBODY SHOULD LEAVE"
BY REBA McENTIRE PLAYS]

NARRATOR: IN 1984, A NEW LABEL
FINALLY LISTENED TO HER.

McENTIRE: AND I SAID
I WOULD REALLY LIKE THINGS

MORE COUNTRY.

I DON'T WANT ORCHESTRA
AND VIOLINS.

I WANT A STEEL GUITAR
AND A FIDDLE.

McENTIRE:
â SOMEBODY SHOULD LEAVE

â BUT WE HATE TO GIVE IN...

McENTIRE: I WANTED THE HELP
TO BRING COUNTRY MUSIC

BACK TO MORE TRADITIONAL.

SO THAT WAS, BOY, THAT WAS
REALLY SOMETHING THAT I LOVED--

GEORGE STRAIT, RICKY SKAGGS,
RANDY TRAVIS.

THAT STARTED ME
HAVING MORE CONTROL

OF THE SONGS THAT I RECORDED.

NARRATOR: JUST AS LORETTA LYNN
HAD DONE IN THE 1960s,

MANY OF McENTIRE'S HITS
TOUCHED ON ISSUES

WOMEN ALL OVER AMERICA
WERE FACING:

DEALING WITH A TROUBLED MARRIAGE
IN "SOMEBODY SHOULD LEAVE"

OR DECIDING TO FINISH
THEIR EDUCATION

AFTER STARTING A FAMILY
IN "IS THERE LIFE OUT THERE."

McENTIRE: "SHE MARRIED WHEN
SHE WAS 20"

"SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS READY

"NOW SHE'S NOT SO SURE...

McENTIRE: I WOULD BE
DOING THAT SONG ONSTAGE,

AND WOMEN WOULD STAND UP IN THE
AUDIENCE, HOLD UP THEIR DIPLOMA.

THEY'D WRITE ME LETTERS SAYING,
"I DIDN'T GET TO GO TO COLLEGE.

"I DIDN'T GET
MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

"AND SO WHEN THE KIDS
GOT OUT OF THE HOUSE,

I WENT BACK AND GOT MY GED."

AND THEY SAID, "THAT
SONG INSPIRED ME."

["SWEET DREAMS" BY
REBA McENTIRE PLAYS]

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: ONE NIGHT
AFTER A CONCERT IN SAN DIEGO,

8 MEMBERS OF McENTIRE'S
BAND PERISHED

IN AN AIRPLANE ACCIDENT--
THE BIGGEST TRAGEDY

FOR THE CLOSE-KNIT
COUNTRY MUSIC FAMILY

SINCE PATSY CLINE WAS KILLED
IN A PLANE CRASH IN 1963,

AFTER A CONCERT
IN WHICH CLINE HAD INTRODUCED

A NEW SONG OF HERS,
"SWEET DREAMS."

McENTIRE:
â€a ...WHY CAN'T I FORGET...

"SWEET DREAMS" WAS THE LAST
SONG I SANG IN, UM, SAN DIEGO

IN MARCH OF '91,
WHEN THE PLANE CRASH HAPPENED.

THAT WAS THE LAST SONG
I GOT TO SING WITH THAT BAND.

NARRATOR: REBA McENTIRE
WOULD GO ON TO FORM

HER OWN ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY;

BE THE FIRST ARTIST TO BE CHOSEN

THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S
FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

4 YEARS IN ROW;

APPEAR IN MOVIES, TELEVISION
SHOWS, AND ON BROADWAY,

AND BECOME THE MOST
SUCCESSFUL FEMALE COUNTRY ARTIST

OF HER ERA.

McENTIRE: IT'S WOMEN
STANDING UP FOR THEMSELVES

IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE,
ANY JOB YOU HAVE.

WOMEN HAVE TO WORK TWICE
AS HARD,

SOMETIMES 3 TIMES AS HARD,

AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY
IT IS IN LIFE.

AND YOU DO IT.

YOU DO IT WITH A SMILE,
BUT YOU WIN.

["GRANDPA"
BY THE JUDDS PLAYS]

NAOMI JUDD: REBA WAS DISCOVERED

SINGING THE "STAR-SPANGLED
BANNER" AT RODEOS.

GEORGE WAS A REAL COWBOY
DOWN IN SAN MARCOS, TEXAS.

WE WERE REAL.

WE DIDN'T NEED A FOCUS GROUP
OR A MARKETING MEETING

AND ANY OF THAT--
ANY OF THAT KIND OF STUFF.

AND PEOPLE WERE HUNGRY FOR THAT.

THE JUDDS: "GRANDPA

" TELL ME
'BOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS "

" SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE

" THIS WORLD'S GONE CRAZY

" GRANDPA

" TAKE ME BACK TO YESTERDAY...

NARRATOR:
NAOMI JUDD WAS A DIVORCED MOTHER

OF TWO STRONG-WILLED DAUGHTERS,

WYNONNA AND ASHLEY,
LIVING IN LOS ANGELES,

WHEN SHE DECIDED TO MOVE BACK
TO HER NATIVE KENTUCKY IN 1976.

NAOMI JUDD: WYNONNA
WAS 12, ASHLEY WAS 8.

AND I HAD TAKEN THEM BACK HOME
TO A MOUNTAINTOP IN KENTUCKY

TO EXPOSE THEM
TO THEIR ANCESTRY.

I WANTED TO REALLY
SORT OF PLUG THE KIDS

INTO THEIR INCREDIBLY RICH

EIGHTH-GENERATION
KENTUCKY HERITAGE.

SO WE LIVED ON A MOUNTAINTOP,
MORRILL, KENTUCKY.

VERY ISOLATED.

THE JUDDS: â€”a TELL ME
'BOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS... â€”a

WYNONNA JUDD: WE LIVED IN
A HOME THAT A WOMAN RENTED TO US

FOR A \$100 A MONTH,

BUT IT HAD HANDMADE QUILTS
ON THE BED;

IT HAD...BLACKBERRY BUSHES
IN THE BACK AND APPLE TREES.

IT WAS A PARADISE,
YET WE HAD NOTHING.

WE CUT OUR OWN HAIR;
WE GREW A GARDEN.

MY MOTHER MADE
EVERYTHING FROM SCRATCH.

IF WE DIDN'T MAKE IT
OR GROW IT, WE DIDN'T HAVE IT.

I MEAN, IT WAS

SIMPLE, SIMPLE, SIMPLE.

NO TV, NO TELEPHONE.

IT WAS ALL ABOUT CREATIVITY

AND SPENDING TIME
IN THE QUIET OF THE WILDERNESS.

NAOMI JUDD: IT WAS
IN THAT SPLENDID SOLITUDE

THAT I HANDED
THE 12-YEAR-OLD NEMESIS--

UM, I HANDED WYNONNA
A PLASTIC STRING GUITAR,

AND VOILA!

THE TRUTH IS,
I WASN'T INTO MUSIC.

I WAS NOT INTO
EVEN BEING A SINGER.

I JUST WAS BORED OUT OF
MY MIND LIVING ON A MOUNTAINTOP

WITH A, YOU KNOW, SINGLE PARENT

AND A SISTER WHO WOULDN'T
LEAVE ME THE HECK ALONE.

AND I THINK THE GUITAR
BECAME MY FRIEND

BECAUSE I WAS JUST SO LONESOME.

THE JUDDS: " ...LOVERS REALLY
FALL IN LOVE TO STAY? "

" STAND BESIDE EACH OTHER
COME WHAT MAY? "

" WAS A PROMISE
REALLY SOMETHING PEOPLE KEPT "

" NOT JUST SOMETHING
THEY WOULD SAY... "

NARRATOR: WHILE WYNONNA
PRACTICED HER GUITAR,

NAOMI STUDIED NURSING,

AND THE TWO OF THEM MANAGED

TO EASE SOME OF
THEIR MOTHER-DAUGHTER TENSIONS

BY LEARNING
TO HARMONIZE TOGETHER.

WYNONNA JUDD: I WOULD LEARN
A SONG AND, ALL OF A SUDDEN,

SHE'D BE RIGHT BEHIND ME,
HUMMING OR SINGING ALONG.

AND I'D BE, LIKE, "OK."

AND THEN IT BECAME A THING.

PEOPLE STARTED ASKING US
TO SING AT FAMILY GATHERINGS,

AND THE NEXT THING I KNOW...

THE JUDDS: "TELL ME
'BOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS"

NAOMI JUDD: WE WERE
STUDYING THE DELMORE BROTHERS,

AND THEY HAD THE MOST
TEMPESTUOUS RELATIONSHIP.

AND IT OCCURRED TO ME, IF YOU
LOOK AT THE WORD "KINDRED,"

IT'S "DREAD OF KIN." HMM!

HA HA!

AND LORD KNOWS, THERE ARE
MANY TIMES WYNONNA AND I

COULDN'T TALK TO EACH OTHER,
BUT WE COULD SING TOGETHER.

SO, YEAH, SHE STARTED
TO HARMONIZE WITH ME,

AND THAT'S WHEN I STARTED TO
REALIZE, "OK. HERE WE GO."

["WHY NOT ME"
BY THE JUDDS PLAYS]

NARRATOR:
THEY MOVED TO NASHVILLE,

WHERE THEY APPEARED

ON A LOCAL TELEVISION SHOW

AT 5:30 EACH MORNING,

BEFORE NAOMI WENT TO WORK
AT A HOSPITAL

AND WYNONNA WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL.

NAOMI SPENT HER DAYS OFF
KNOCKING ON EVERY DOOR

ON MUSIC ROW, TRYING TO GET
AN AUDITION WITH A RECORD LABEL.

THE JUDDS: "WHY NOT ME..."

NARRATOR: FINALLY, THROUGH THE
HELP OF THE FAMILY OF A PATIENT

NAOMI HAD NURSED BACK TO HEALTH,

THE JUDDS MANAGED TO GET
AN APPOINTMENT WITH JOE GALANTE,

THE HEAD OF RCA RECORDS
IN NASHVILLE.

THE JUDDS: "WHY NOT ME
ON A RAINY DAY..."

AND WYNONNA AND I HAD HAD
A HUGE FIGHT. OF COURSE!

AND WE WEREN'T SPEAKING.
SO WE GO INTO THIS ROOM, AND...

WYNONNA JUDD:
IT FELT VERY MUCH LIKE

GOING TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE.

AND YET I KNEW THAT THESE
WERE MEN WHO HAD A BUSINESS

THAT COULD HELP US MUSICALLY.

I WAS USED TO SINGING.

I JUST WASN'T USED TO BEING
IN A BOARDROOM FULL OF MEN.

AND I FELT VERY, UM...

I GUESS THE WORD IS "GUILTY."

I FELT GUILTY THAT I HAD

PUT HER IN THAT SITUATION.

I MEAN, SHE WAS ONLY LIKE
17 1/2 YEARS OLD.

AND SHE WAS TERRIFIED.

I MEAN, LIKE TERRIFIED
IN A BAD WAY, JUST FROZEN,

AND I LOOKED AT HER, AND I
SAID, "OK. HERE YOU GO, KIDDO.

"WE'RE BACK ON THAT MOUNTAINTOP.

"AND THERE'S A STORM ROLLING IN,
AND WE'RE SITTING ON THE PORCH.

LET'S JUST SING."

THE JUDDS: "WHY NOT ME?

AND THEY CAME IN,
AND WE HAD BRACES.

NAOMI WAS STUNNING, AS ALWAYS.

AND THEY OPENED UP THEIR MOUTHS,
AND IT WAS...

WE ALL JUST KIND OF
WENT, "OH, MY GOD."

"YOU HAD TO SEE
IF THE WORLD WAS ROUND"

"IT'S TIME THAT YOU LEARNED
HOW GOOD SETTLING"

"DOWN COULD BE

"WHY NOT ME...

NARRATOR: THEIR FIRST ALBUM,
RELEASED IN 1984,

HIT THE TOP OF THE CHARTS.

THEY WOULD BECOME THE MOST
DOMINANT COUNTRY MUSIC DUO

FOR THE REST OF THE 1980s.

"WHY NOT ME WHEN
THE NIGHTS GET COLD..."

WYNONNA JUDD: THAT SONG

BECAME OUR ANTHEM, ACTUALLY.

"WHY NOT ME" WAS, MY MOM WOULD
SAY, SHE WOULD SAY, YOU KNOW,

"WE WAKE UP EVERY DAY,
AND WE JUST LOOK UP

AND SAY, 'WHY NOT ME?'"

I'LL NEVER FORGET
HER SAYING THAT

BECAUSE EVERYONE WANTED US
TO MAKE IT.

WE WERE MOTHER-DAUGHTER;
THEY KNEW OUR STORY.

AND THEY KNEW THAT
WE HAD NOTHING,

AND THEY WANTED
TO SEE US MAKE IT.

WE WERE THE UNDERDOG.

AND "WHY NOT ME" BECAME
OUR ANTHEM.

â€œ ...BABY, WHY NOT ME...

â€œ LA LA LA LA,
LA LA LA LA LA â€œ

â€œ LA LA

â€œ OH!

â€œ BABY,
WHY NOT ME? â€œ

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

["FOREVER AND EVER AMEN"
BY RANDY TRAVIS PLAYS]

NARRATOR: NAOMI AND WYNONNA
JUDD, REBA McENTIRE,

RANDY TRAVIS, GEORGE STRAIT,
AND RICKY SKAGGS WERE

ALL PART OF A GROUP
THAT CAME TO BE CALLED

THE NEO-TRADITIONALISTS.

MALONE: THE NEO-TRADITIONALISTS,

I THINK THERE WAS JUST A GENERAL
FEELING AMONG MANY PEOPLE

THAT SOMETHING NEEDED TO BE DONE
TO REVITALIZE COUNTRY MUSIC

AND MOVE IT AWAY
FROM WHAT SEEMED TO BE

JUST AN ALL-OUT, UNENDING
FUSION WITH POP MUSIC.

SECOR: THE NEW
TRADITIONALISTS WERE THERE

BECAUSE COUNTRY HAD NOW
GONE SO FAR INTO POP MUSIC

AND WAS SO CONSUMED
WITH MAKING A BUCK

THAT WE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT
IT WAS LIKE TO CRY IN OUR BEER.

I MEAN, WE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT
IT WAS LIKE TO GO HONKY TONKING.

TRAVIS: â€œ ...FOREVER AND EVER

â€œ FOREVER AND EVER

â€œ AMEN

["SEND ME THE PILLOW YOU DREAM
ON" BY HANK LOCKLIN PLAY]

YOAKAM: MY EARLIEST MEMORY,
PROBABLY AT 3, 4 YEARS OLD,

WAS WEDGED IN THAT
GREAT KIND OF WOMB-LIKE SQUISH

THAT YOU'LL GET BETWEEN
YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR AUNT.

AND WE WERE SINGING AT
THE RECORD PLAYER, NOT WITH IT,

BUT DIRECTIONALLY AT IT.

LOCKLIN: â€œ SEND ME THE PILLOW
THAT YOU DREAM ON... â€œ

AND IT WAS "SEND ME

THE PILLOW THAT YOU DREAM ON."

AND WE, LITERALLY, I, AS A KID,
YOU KNOW, I JUST--

IT WAS JUST WITH ABANDON
I SANG WITH THEM.

WE WERE HOLLERING. IT WAS...

â SEND ME THE PILLOW
THAT YOU DREAM ON â

â SO, DARLING, I CAN
DREAM ON IT, TOO â

THAT'S MY FIRST MEMORY.

[SONG ENDS]

NARRATOR: DWIGHT YOAKAM WAS BORN
IN PIKEVILLE, KENTUCKY,

IN 1956.

HIS EARLIEST
MUSICAL INFLUENCES WERE

HIS MOTHER'S COLLECTION
OF COUNTRY MUSIC RECORDS

AND THE HYMNS
HIS FAMILY SANG EACH WEEK

AT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

A DENOMINATION THAT ENCOURAGED
A CAPPELLA GOSPEL SINGING,

READINGS FROM THE BIBLE, AND
TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM ALCOHOL.

HE STARTED PLAYING GUITAR
AT AGE 6.

YOAKAM: I'D SIT ON
A FRONT PORCH SWING

AT MY GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE
IN FLOYD COUNTY, KENTUCKY,

IN THAT HOLLER.

I WAS SINGING THE SONG, "MY
BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT."

â WELL, MY BUCKET'S GOT

A HOLE IN IT

YEAH, MY
BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT

HEY, MY BUCKET'S GOT
A HOLE IN IT

I CAN'T BUY NO BEER

10 YEARS OLD, AND I DIDN'T
REALLY KNOW WHAT IT WAS ABOUT.

"I CAN'T BUY NO BEER."

MY MOTHER CAME OUT FROM THE BACK
OF THE HOUSE OUT ON THAT PORCH,

AND SHE LOOKED AT ME AND SHE
SAID, "I DON'T--

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU NEED
TO BE SINGING THAT."

AND I SAID, "WHAT?
WELL, IT'S ..."

'CAUSE IT HAD BEER. YOU KNOW,
IT WAS A GUY DRINKING BEER.

AND ABOUT THAT TIME,
WE HEARD ACROSS THE HOLLER,

ABOUT TWO ACRES DOWN, THERE
WAS--IT WAS AN OLDER COUPLE,

THE HUNLEYS.

I HEARD HER VOICE COME ACROSS
AS MY MOTHER HAD SCOLDED ME

ABOUT THIS.

SHE SAID, "THAT WAS GOOD.
DO IT AGAIN."

HARRIS: TOGETHER AGAIN

NARRATOR: IN HIGH SCHOOL,
YOAKAM WAS ACTIVE IN THEATER

AND FORMED A ROCKABILLY BAND
CALLED DWIGHT AND THE GREASERS.

INSPIRED BY THE EARLY RECORDS

THAT EMMYLOU HARRIS

WAS RECORDING,

HE MOVED TO LOS ANGELES.

YOAKAM: THE BEACON
THAT I NAVIGATED TOWARD

WAS EMMYLOU HARRIS.

YOAKAM: I WOULD NOT HAVE
BECOME THE ARTIST I BECAME

WITHOUT HER FIRST TWO ALBUMS

BECAUSE THEY ARE THE DIRECT
TISSUE CONNECTION, MUSICALLY,

TO BUCK OWENS AND MERLE HAGGARD
FOR MY GENERATION.

I'VE OFTEN SAID, "I WAS BORN IN
KENTUCKY, I WAS RAISED IN OHIO,

BUT I GREW UP IN CALIFORNIA."

â€ HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DOWN
KENTUCKY WAY, SAY SOUTH OF... â€

NARRATOR: HE WORKED AS
A SHORT-ORDER COOK,

DROVE DELIVERY TRUCKS,

AND FORMED DWIGHT YOAKAM
AND KENTUCKY BOURBON,

A BAR BAND THAT PLAYED REGULARLY
AT THE PALOMINO NIGHTCLUB

IN NORTH HOLLYWOOD.

HE PREFERRED HARD-CORE
HONKY TONK TUNES

AND THE BAKERSFIELD SOUND
THAT WAS POPULAR IN THE 1960s.

BUT IT WAS THE EARLY 1980s,

AND THEY WERE CONSTANTLY TOLD
TO PERFORM

MORE POPULAR MAINSTREAM SONGS.

THEY REFUSED.

WHEN THEY WERE FIRED,

THE BAND CHANGED ITS NAME

TO DWIGHT YOAKAM
AND THE BABYLONIAN COWBOYS.

YOAKAM: "CAUSE THEY'D LEARNED
READIN', RIGHTIN'..."

NARRATOR: THEY FOUND WORK

WITHIN L.A.'s POST-PUNK
ROCK SCENE,

OPENING FOR GROUPS
LIKE THE BLASTERS,

GUN CLUB, AND LOS LOBOS.

THE HIP AUDIENCES WENT WILD
FOR YOAKAM AND HIS MUSIC--

SONGS HE'D WRITTEN HIMSELF,

AS WELL AS ONE
THAT JOHNNY HORTON HAD RELEASED

BACK IN 1956,
THE YEAR DWIGHT WAS BORN.

["HONKY TONK MAN"
BY DWIGHT YOAKAM PLAYS]

"WELL, I'M A HONKY TONK MAN

" AND I CAN'T SEEM TO STOP...

I HAD BEGUN
TO DO "HONKY TONK MAN."

AND I STARTED DOING IT
WITH THE BAND,

AND THE AUDIENCE RESPONDED
VERY IMMEDIATELY TO IT.

"...SINGING, "HEY, HEY, MAMA,
CAN YOUR DADDY COME HOME?" "

I THINK IN DECEMBER OF 1985,
WE WENT IN AND RECORDED IT.

AND IT LAUNCHED
WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO DO

FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS
OF MY LIFE.

HE BROUGHT STYLE BACK;

HE BROUGHT ABSOLUTE SWAGGER,
A ROCK AND ROLL SWAGGER,

WITH ABSOLUTE
HARD-HITTING COUNTRY MUSIC.

â€” I'M A HONKY TONK MAN...

STUART: HE KIND OF KICKED IT
AND RESTARTED IT.

YOAKAM:
â€” ...CAN'T SEEM TO STOP

â€” I LOVE TO GIVE
THE GIRLS A WHIRL â€”

â€” TO THE MUSIC
OF AN OLD JUKEBOX â€”

â€” BUT WHEN MY MONEY'S ALL GONE

â€” ON THE TELEPHONE, SINGIN'

â€” "HEY, HEY, MAMA,
CAN YOUR DADDY COME HOME?" â€”

NARRATOR: YOAKAM'S
FIRST ALBUM, RELEASED IN 1986,

ALSO INCLUDED A SONG OF HIS OWN,

WITH THE LINE, "GUITARS,
CADILLACS, AND HILLBILLY MUSIC."

HIS LABEL TOLD HIM TO DROP
THE "HILLBILLY" REFERENCE.

YOAKAM: â€” NOW, IT'S GUITARS

â€” CADILLACS

â€” AND HILLBILLY MUSIC

â€” LONELY, LONELY STREETS
I CALL HOME... â€”

WARNER MUSIC-NASHVILLE,

WAS NOT PREPARED
TO HAVE US RELEASE A SONG

WITH THE TERM
"HILLBILLY MUSIC" IN IT.

THEY WERE ASHAMED
OF THE TERM "HILLBILLY."

THEY THOUGHT IT WAS DEROGATORY.

AND I SAID, "OH, NO.
THAT'S SOMETHING I'M PROUD OF."

I AM PROUD OF IT BECAUSE MY--

I WATCHED--

I WATCHED MY OWN FAMILY
SUBMITTED TO RIDICULE

AND BEING CALLED HILLBILLIES.

BUT, GENERATIONALLY, I
DIDN'T HAVE THE SAME OPEN WOUND.

AND SO I WAS ABLE TO BE PROUD

OF WHAT THAT MUSICAL LEGACY
WAS ABOUT.

â€” ...THERE AIN'T NO GLAMOUR
IN THIS TINSELED LAND â€”

â€” OF LOST AND WASTED LIVES

â€” AND PAINFUL SCARS ARE ALL

â€” THAT'S LEFT OF ME...

NARRATOR:
YOAKAM STUCK TO HIS GUNS.

WHEN THE ALBUM SOLD
MORE THAN TWO MILLION RECORDS,

HIS LABEL HAD NO PROBLEM AT ALL

WITH THE TITLE OF HIS
NEXT ALBUM: "HILLBILLY DELUXE."

BUT YOAKAM'S OUTSPOKENNESS
PUT HIM AT ODDS

WITH SOME INDUSTRY INSIDERS
IN NASHVILLE.

HE HAD USED
A STRING OF PROFANITIES

WHEN REPORTERS ASKED HIM
ABOUT JOHNNY CASH

BEING DROPPED BY HIS LABEL,

AND HIS OPINIONS

ABOUT MUSIC ROW'S SMOOTH
COUNTRYPOLITAN SOUND

WERE EQUALLY HARSH.

DARIUS RUCKER: DWIGHT YOAKAM
WAS A BIG INFLUENCE ON ME.

HE AIN'T AFRAID TO BE
OLD-SCHOOL DIRT COUNTRY

ALL THE TIME.

HE AIN'T AFRAID TO SING
ABOUT ANY SUBJECT

HE WANTS TO SING ABOUT.

AND IT CHANGED THE WAY
I HEARD MUSIC.

I SAID TO MYSELF, I SAID,

"I'M GOING TO MAKE
A COUNTRY RECORD SOMEDAY.

I WANT TO DO THIS."

NARRATOR: IN 1988, BUCK OWENS,

WHO HAD ALSO CHAFED AT WHAT HE
CONSIDERED NASHVILLE'S SLIGHTS

TOWARD COUNTRY ARTISTS
FROM CALIFORNIA,

ASKED HIS YOUNG FRIEND
TO PERFORM WITH HIM

AT THE CMA AWARDS.

YOAKAM: AND HE CALLED ME UP
AND SAID, "DWIGHT,

"I'VE GOT THIS SONG THAT WE NEED
TO GO SING ON THE CMA AWARDS.

"IT'S CALLED
'STREETS OF BAKERSFIELD.'

IT'S A GOOD ONE."

WELL, HE SENT A CASSETTE

DOWN TO ME.

AND I STARTED PLAYING IT
IN THE CAR.

I THOUGHT, "THEY'RE
GOING TO TAR AND FEATHER US.

THEY'RE GOING TO RUN
US OUT OF TOWN ON A RAIL."

NARRATOR: OWENS HAD
RECORDED THE SONG IN 1972

WITH LITTLE SUCCESS.

â YOU DON'T KNOW ME,
BUT YOU DON'T LIKE ME â

â YOU SAY YOU CARE LESS
HOW I FEEL... â

SO WE WENT DOWN THERE
AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT,

BUT BUCK WAS, AS USUAL,
BUCK WAS RIGHT.

â ...STREETS OF BAKERSFIELD

â YOU DON'T KNOW ME,
BUT YOU DON'T LIKE ME â

â YOU SAY YOU CARE LESS
HOW I FEEL â

â HOW MANY OF YOU...

YOAKAM: THE LARGER
THEME, WHICH ADDRESSES

THE DISPLACED FROM ANYWHERE,

YOU KNOW, WHICH--
BELIES TIME AND PLACE,

BUT HAS TO DO WITH THE UNIVERSAL
THAT WE ALL FEEL

GOING BACK TO THOSE THAT CAME
ON THE "MAYFLOWER"

TO NOW BEING "LESS THAN."

â ...FIND ANYWHERE ELSE

â HEY, I'M NOT

TRYING TO BE NOBODY

I JUST WANT A CHANCE
TO BE MYSELF

I'VE SPENT A THOUSAND
MILES OF THUMBIN'

YES, I'VE WORN
BLISTERS ON MY HEELS

TRYING TO FIND ME
SOMETHING BETTER

HERE ON THE STREETS
OF BAKERSFIELD

HEY, YOU DON'T KNOW ME,
BUT YOU DON'T LIKE ME

YOAKAM: AND THAT'S WHAT
"THE STREETS OF BAKERSFIELD"

WAS ABOUT.

AND I REALIZED IN THAT MOMENT,

IT'LL BE CHEERED BY PEOPLE
WHO ARE THE OUTCASTS,

THE OUTSIDERS IN EVERY CULTURE.

AND WHEN PETE ANDERSON
AND I DECIDED TO RECORD

OUR VERSION OF IT HERE
THAT BUCK CAME AND SANG ON,

WE ADDED FLACO JIMENEZ

PLAYING THE TEX-MEX CALIFORNIA
BORDER CULTURE ACCORDION...

BECAUSE I THOUGHT, "WOW!"

THAT'S ALSO PART OF DISPLACED
GROUPS OF DISPARATE PEOPLE,

FROM THE WHITE OKIES
FROM THE DUST BOWL

TO THE MIGRANT WORKERS

OF THOSE SAME FIELDS
AROUND BAKERSFIELD

BY THE SIXTIES,

SEVENTIES, AND EIGHTIES.

OWENS: "THEN I THANKED HIM
AS I WAS LEAVIN'..."

NARRATOR: WHEN IT WAS RELEASED,
THE DWIGHT YOAKAM/BUCK OWENS
DUET GAVE OWENS

HIS FIRST NUMBER ONE SINGLE
IN 16 YEARS.

"DWIGHT YOAKAM," HE SAID,
"SHOULD'VE BEEN ONE OF MY SONS."

OWENS AND YOAKAM: "BUT HOW MANY
OF YOU THAT SIT AND JUDGE ME"

"EVER WALKED THE STREETS
OF BAKERSFIELD?"

["I'M SO LONESOME I COULD
CRY" BY HANK WILLIAMS PLAYS]

WILLIAMS: "HEAR THAT LONESOME
WHIPPOORWILL"

"HE SOUNDS TOO BLUE TO FLY..."

MAN: EVERYBODY HAS
AN ETHNIC HERITAGE OF SOME SORT.

IT'S MORE INTEGRATED
THAN WE THINK.

BUT WE HAVE A HUMAN HERITAGE

THAT'S MUCH
MORE FUNDAMENTAL AND GREATER.

WILLIAMS: "I'M SO LONESOME
I COULD CRY..."

MAN: THERE ARE THINGS THAT
ARE A PART OF THE LANDSCAPE

OF HUMAN LIFE THAT
WE ALL DEAL WITH--

THE JOY OF BIRTH;
THE SORROW OF DEATH;

A BROKEN HEART; JEALOUSY...

GREED; ENVY; ANGER.

ALL OF THESE THINGS ARE
WHAT MUSIC,

BECAUSE IT IS THE ART
OF THE INVISIBLE,

IT GETS INSIDE OF THAT,

AND IT DOES NOT
GET INSIDE OF IT LESS FOR YOU

THAN IT DOES FOR ME.

I THINK A LOT OF OUR MUSIC
IS THE SAME.

IF YOU JUST DEAL WITH THE CHURCH
MUSIC, "I LET GOD DOWN.

I NEED TO GO DO THIS
TO FIND REDEMPTION."

SO, WHAT ELSE
ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

"MAN, LOOK WHAT I DID
TO MY OLD LADY.

"OH, BOY, LOOK AT MY, LOOK AT MY
OLD LADY, WHAT SHE DID TO ME.

DAMN!"

NOW, IT'S COMING OUT
IN DIFFERENT FORMS.

BUT THE ROOT OF IT IS THAT.

AND IF YOU CAN TELL
THOSE STORIES THAT WAY,

THEN YOU ARE PATSY CLINE.

WILLIAMS: "DID YOU EVER SEE
A ROBIN WEEP..."

MARSALIS: YEAH, HANK WILLIAMS.
HE HAD THAT THING.

YOU HEAR IT. IT'S LIKE, "OK."
AND WHEN HE STARTS...

"DO DEE DE LOO DO DEE DO DEE

YOU HEAR THAT CRY AND THAT--
THAT YEARNING IN IT.

WILLIAMS: "I'M SO LONESOME,
I COULD CRY"

THERE'S A TRUTH IN THE MUSIC.

AND IT'S TOO BAD
THAT WE, AS A CULTURE,

HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE
TO ADDRESS THAT TRUTH.

THAT'S THE SHAME OF IT,

AND NOT LETTING
THAT TRUTH BE OUR TRUTH.

WILLIAMS: "...LIGHTS UP
A PURPLE SKY"

"AND AS I WONDER

"WHERE YOU ARE

"I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY

["GUITAR TOWN"
BY STEVE EARLE PLAYS]

EARLE: "HEY, PRETTY BABY,
ARE YOU READY FOR ME?"

"YEAH, IT'S A GOOD ROCKIN'
DADDY DOWN FROM TENNESSEE..."

NARRATOR: REGARDLESS OF WHETHER
IT WAS NEW TRADITIONALISTS,

OLD TRADITIONALISTS,

COUNTRY ROCK, OR COUNTRYPOLITAN,

ALL OF IT WAS GOOD FOR
MUSIC CITY.

EARLE: "THERE'S A POLICE TRAP
UP AHEAD, SELMA TOWN..."

NARRATOR: THE FINANCIAL
RESURGENCE ALSO MADE ROOM

FOR OTHER ARTISTS
WHO WERE HARDER TO CATEGORIZE.

NANCI GRIFFITH HAD BEEN
A KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

BEFORE MAKING A NAME FOR HERSELF

WITH PLAINTIVE BALLADS

AND SONGS
SHE DESCRIBED AS "FOLKABILLY."

LYLE LOVETT,
A SINGER-SONGWRITER FROM TEXAS,

CAME OUT WITH ALBUMS TINGED
WITH EVERYTHING

FROM FOLK TO HONKY TONK,
GOSPEL TO RHYTHM AND BLUES.

IN ALBERTA, CANADA,
k.d. lang ADOPTED A PERSONA

AS A PUNK REINCARNATION
OF PATSY CLINE.

AS A REBELLIOUS TEENAGER,

STEVE EARLE DROPPED OUT
OF HIGH SCHOOL

AND CLAIMED TOWNES VAN ZANDT

AS HIS SONGWRITING MENTOR
AND ROLE MODEL.

HE STRUGGLED FOR 10 YEARS
TO GET KNOWN, UNTIL 1986,

WHEN HE EMERGED WITH A SOUND

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN COUNTRY
AND EARLY ROCK.

âa HEY, PRETTY BABY, DON'T
YOU KNOW IT AIN'T MY FAULT? âa

âa I LOVE TO HEAR THE STEEL BELTS
HUMMIN' ON THE ASPHALT âa

âa WAKE UP IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE NIGHT IN A TRUCK STOP âa

âa STUMBLE IN A RESTAURANT
WONDERIN' WHY I DON'T STOP âa

âa WELL, I GOTTA
KEEP ROCKIN'... âa

MATTEA: I MEAN,
WE KIND OF ALL THINK OF IT

AS A GOLDEN AGE

IN COUNTRY MUSIC,
WHERE EVERYBODY WAS WELCOME.

YOU HEARD
NANCI GRIFFITH ON THE RADIO.

YOU HEARD STEVE EARLE'S
VOICE ON THE RADIO.

YOU HEARD LYLE LOVETT.

MY PICTURE OF IT IN MY MIND IS
THESE BIG DOORS OPENING UP,

IT'S LIKE, THIS OPENING,

WHERE INSTEAD OF BEING,
LIKE, THE GATEKEEPERS

WHO WERE JUST LETTING
A FEW PEOPLE IN,

SUDDENLY EVERYBODY WAS WELCOME.

I MEAN, WE WERE COUNTRY MUSIC.

WE DIDN'T KNOW
IT WAS GOING TO LAST

FOR SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME.

["COME FROM THE HEART"
BY KATHY MATTEA PLAYS]

MATTEA:
"WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL

"MY DADDY TOLD ME...

NARRATOR: GROWING UP
IN WEST VIRGINIA,

KATHY MATTEA ORIGINALLY
SANG FOLK MUSIC AND BLUEGRASS.

HER TASTES BROADENED WHEN
SHE TOOK A JOB AS A TOUR GUIDE

AT THE COUNTRY MUSIC
HALL OF FAME

AND BROADENED AGAIN WHEN
SHE STARTED EARNING EXTRA MONEY

SINGING ON DEMO TAPES
FOR SONGWRITERS

PITCHING THEIR TUNES ON
MUSIC ROW.

MATTEA:
"YOU GOT TO SING

BACKUP SINGERS:
"SING, OOH...

"LIKE YOU DON'T
NEED THE MONEY "

"LOVE

"LOVE, OOH...

"LIKE YOU'LL NEVER
GET HURT... "

NARRATOR: ALONG THE WAY,
MATTEA GOT A RECORDING CONTRACT

AND ENDED UP

WITH THE INDEPENDENT
PRODUCER ALLEN REYNOLDS.

MAN: I ACTUALLY DECIDED
I WOULD SELL MY STUDIO,

AND THEN BEFORE I MANAGED TO
DO THAT, I MET KATHY MATTEA.

AND, UH, I REALLY LIKED HER.

I LIKED HER MIND,
AND I LIKED HER TALENT.

AND I GOT TO WORKING WITH HER,

AND IT ENDED UP BEING
VERY NOURISHING FOR ME.

HER ROOTS WERE MORE FOLK MUSIC,

BUT SHE WANTED TO BE
A COUNTRY SINGER.

SHE WAS VERY CLEAR ABOUT THAT.

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO STRADDLE
THE FENCE AND BE COUNTRY-POP

OR THAT KIND OF THING.

SHE WANTED TO PRESENT HERSELF

AS A COUNTRY SINGER.

ALLEN REYNOLDS WOULD LOOK AT ME
AND SAY, "IT'S THE SONG, PAL.

"IT'S THE SONG.

"IT'S NOT ALL THE BELLS
AND WHISTLES.

"IT'S A GOOD SONG, SUNG
HONESTLY, AND WELL-FRAMED.

"DON'T EVER FORGET IT.

"WHEN THEY START TELLING YOU
IT'S ABOUT ALL THIS OTHER STUFF,

YOU JUST COME BACK TO THAT,
YOU WILL ALWAYS BE OK."

MATTEA: "LIKE YOU'LL
NEVER GET HURT... "

"YOU'VE GOT TO DANCE,
DANCE, DANCE "

"LIKE NOBODY'S WATCHIN'

"IT'S GOT TO COME
FROM THE HEART "

"IF YOU WANT IT TO WORK

"YOU'VE GOT TO SING...

WOMAN: MY FIRST OBSESSION
WITH COUNTRY MUSIC

WAS IN THE NINETIES.

IT WAS REBA
AND MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER

AND KATHY MATTEA.

I LOVE STRONG WOMEN
TELLING STORIES.

AND I THINK IN COUNTRY MUSIC,

ESPECIALLY AT THAT TIME,
THAT'S WHERE YOU--

IF YOU WANTED TO LOOK FOR,
LIKE, SUPER STRONG WOMEN,

TELLING REALLY AMAZING STORIES,
YOU WENT TO COUNTRY.

NARRATOR: EARLY IN HER CAREER,
MATTEA HAD PERFORMED REGULARLY

AT A NEWLY OPENED
DINNER-AND-MUSIC VENUE

CALLED THE BLUEBIRD CAFE.

ITS FOUNDER WAS AMY KURLAND,

THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF
THE LEADING SESSION MUSICIANS

IN NASHVILLE'S
RECORDING STUDIOS.

WOMAN: I HAVE TO CONFESS,
I OPENED THE BLUEBIRD CAFE

BECAUSE I WAS DATING
A GUITAR PLAYER.

I WANTED TO BE
IN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS,

AND HE SAID, "IF YOU'LL PUT
IN A STAGE,

ME AND ALL MY BUDDIES
WILL PLAY THERE FOR YOU."

I WAS JUST TRYING TO KEEP
MY BOYFRIEND HAPPY. HA HA!

NARRATOR: SOON, THE MUSIC BECAME
MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE MENU.

KURLAND HELD AUDITIONS
FOR ASPIRING SONGWRITERS,

THEN ADDED A SPECIAL
WRITERS IN THE ROUND

IN WHICH THEY SAT IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE AUDIENCE

RATHER THAN ON A STAGE, AND
EXCHANGED STORIES AND NEW SONGS.

AMY KURLAND: AROUND NASHVILLE,

SOMETIMES A SONGWRITER
WILL WRITE A GREAT SONG,

TAKE IT OUT TO THEIR PUBLISHER
OR RECORD LABEL AND BE TOLD,

"YEAH, GREAT SONG, BUT
THAT'S A BLUEBIRD SONG."

IN OTHER WORDS,
IT'S TOO LONG; IT'S TOO SERIOUS;

IT'S TOO MEANINGFUL;
IT'S NOT GONNA FLY,

SO TO SPEAK, ON THE RADIO.

["WHERE'VE YOU BEEN"
BY JON VEZNER PLAYS]

NARRATOR: IN 1988, A SONGWRITER
FROM MINNESOTA NAMED JON VEZNER

TOOK THE STAGE AT THE BLUEBIRD.

VEZNER:
"CLARE HAD ALL BUT GIVEN UP

" WHEN SHE AND EDWIN
FELL IN LOVE... "

NARRATOR: HE AND HIS FRIEND
DON HENRY

HAD WRITTEN A SONG INSPIRED
BY AN EVENT IN VEZNER'S LIFE,

AND HE DECIDED TO SING IT THAT
NIGHT IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE.

VEZNER: "WHERE'VE YOU BEEN...

NARRATOR: KATHY MATTEA
WAS NOW MARRIED TO VEZNER,

AND SHE KNEW THE STORY
BEHIND THE SONG.

IT DESCRIBES HIS
GRANDPARENTS' LIFELONG LOVE,

FROM THEIR COURTSHIP
TO THEIR MARRIAGE

TO THEIR FINAL MOMENT TOGETHER.

HIS GRANDMOTHER
HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED,

SUFFERING FROM DEMENTIA,

UNABLE TO RECOGNIZE VISITORS

AND NOT TALKING WITH ANYONE.

THEN JON WHEELED
HIS GRANDFATHER INTO HER ROOM.

MATTEA:
AND SHE JUST KEPT LOOKING AT HIM

AND LOOKING AT HIM.

AND SHE SAID,
"WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?"

AND THAT WAS THE LAST THING SHE
SAID. SHE DIED DAYS AFTER THAT.

AND HE WRITES THIS STORY
INTO A SONG.

VEZNER: "HE ASKED HER
FOR HER HAND FOR LIFE"

"AND SHE BECAME
A SALESMAN'S WIFE..."

NARRATOR: RECORDING LABELS
AND ARTISTS THROUGHOUT NASHVILLE

TOLD VEZNER
WHAT A POWERFUL SONG IT WAS,

BUT EVERYONE HAD TURNED IT DOWN.

MATTEA: THAT NIGHT AT
THE BLUEBIRD WHEN HE PLAYED IT,

I GOT TO SEE, COLLECTIVELY,

THE UNIVERSAL POIGNANCY
OF THAT SONG.

VEZNER: "WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?"

MATTEA: YOU COULD HEAR
AUDIBLE SOBS ALL OVER THE ROOM.

PEOPLE WERE, LIKE, DUMBSTRUCK.

THEY DIDN'T EVEN CLAP
AT THE END OF IT.

YOU KNOW, THE POIGNANCY
OF BEING ABLE TO BE BROUGHT BACK

BY THE LOVE YOU HAVE

FOR SOMEONE,

IT REACHES DEEP IN US.

MATTEA: "THEY'D NEVER SPENT
A NIGHT APART"

"FOR 60 YEARS,
SHE HEARD HIM SNORE..."

MATTEA, VOICE-OVER: AND I--
I JUST BECAME OBSESSED

WITH RECORDING IT BECAUSE I FELT
THAT IT NEEDED TO BE HEARD.

"IN THE HOSPITAL..."

REYNOLDS: AND SHE KNEW
HOW SHE WANTED TO RECORD IT.

WE WEREN'T THINKING
ABOUT IT AS A SINGLE,

AND OF ALL THINGS, RADIO BEGAN
TO CALL FOR THAT AS A SINGLE,

AND, UH--AND IT WAS
A STRONG ENOUGH CALL

THAT THE RECORD LABEL SAID,
"LET'S TRY IT."

AND, UH, THEN IT WON
SONG OF THE YEAR.

IT GOT A GRAMMY.

IT GOT A NASHVILLE SONGWRITERS
ASSOCIATION AWARD.

IT WON ALL THESE AWARDS,
AND PEOPLE LOVED IT.

"CLAIRE SOON LOST
HER MEMORY"

"FORGOT THE NAMES
OF FAMILY"

"SHE NEVER SPOKE
A WORD AGAIN"

"THEN ONE DAY,
THEY WHEELED HIM IN"

"HE HELD HER HAND

AND STROKED HER HAIR

AND IN A FRAGILE VOICE,
SHE SAID

"WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?"

"I'VE LOOKED FOR YOU
FOREVER AND A DAY"

"WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?"

"I'M JUST NOT MYSELF
WHEN YOU'RE AWAY"

"NO, I'M JUST
NOT MYSELF WHEN YOU'RE AWAY"

["LET ME LOVE YOU TONIGHT"
BY PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE PLAYS]

DARK CLOUDS ARE BLOWING
IN THE WIND

HE'S CROSSING
YOUR MIND AGAIN

YOU'VE GOT THAT
SAD, SAD FEELING

FROM A BROKEN HEART...

GILL, VOICE-OVER: I DON'T KNOW,
WHETHER YOU WRITE THE SONG

OR THE SONG WRITES YOU.

THE LANGUAGE HAS BEEN AROUND
FOR LONGER

THAN ANY OF US, YOU KNOW,

AND IT'S JUST OUR JOB TO PICK
PIECES OF LANGUAGE UP

THAT MOVE US
AND TIE THEM TOGETHER.

LOVE YOU TONIGHT

I'LL MAKE EVERYTHING
ALL RIGHT

WHEN YOU FIND OUT HOW...

NARRATOR: BY 1989, VINCE GILL
HAD BEEN IN NASHVILLE

FOR 7 YEARS, STRUGGLING
TO MAKE IT.

HE HAD STARTED OUT IN BLUEGRASS,
WHERE HIS HIGH TENOR VOICE

AND EXTRAORDINARY SKILL
ON STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

HAD MADE HIM A LOCAL STAR
IN HIS HOME STATE OF OKLAHOMA.

GILL: "I LOVE YOU TONIGHT

NARRATOR: IN LOS ANGELES, HE HAD
SWITCHED GEARS TO BECOME

LEAD SINGER
IN THE COUNTRY-POP GROUP

PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE
BEFORE RODNEY CROWELL

PERSUADED HIM TO JOIN HIS BAND,
THE CHERRY BOMBS,

AND BACK UP ROSANNE CASH.

GILL: "I ...LOVE YOU TONIGHT...

NARRATOR: GILL SOON MOVED
TO NASHVILLE TO RECORD

HIS OWN ALBUMS,
BUT THEY DIDN'T SELL WELL ENOUGH

TO SUPPORT HIMSELF
AND HIS FAMILY.

HE SAT IN ON OTHER ARTISTS'
SESSIONS AS A GUITARIST

AND HARMONY VOCALIST,

KEPT WRITING SONGS
AND PLAYING THEM

AT THE BLUEBIRD CAFE,

AND, BECAUSE
OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY TALENT

AND EASY-GOING NATURE,
BECAME WELL-LIKED

WITHIN MUSIC CITY'S

COUNTRY FAMILY.

GEORGE JONES AFFECTIONATELY
CALLED HIM "SWEET PEA."

[CROWD CHEERING]

IMPRESSED BY GILL'S
GUITAR PLAYING,

MARK KNOPFLER OF THE ROCK BAND
DIRE STRAITS ASKED HIM

TO LEAVE NASHVILLE AND JOIN
THE GROUP ON A WORLD TOUR.

IT WAS THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME.

GILL: I WAS STRUGGLING TO PAY
THE HOUSE NOTE AT THE TIME,

AND THIS WOULD HAVE CURED
EVERYTHING FOR ME FINANCIALLY,

AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
A GREAT EXPERIENCE.

YOU KNOW, THE MUSICIAN IN ME
WANTED TO DO THAT SO BADLY

BECAUSE I LOVE THE WAY
HE PLAYS AND SINGS,

BUT I TOLD MYSELF "IF YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO BELIEVE IN YOU,

"WHO ELSE IS?

"AND I'M GOING TO
HAVE TO SAY NO.

"YOU KNOW, I DON'T WANT
TO SAY NO,

"BUT I HAVE TO TRY.

"I THINK I HAVE SOMETHING
TO OFFER

FOR THIS WORLD
OF COUNTRY MUSIC."

["WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME"
BY VINCE GILL PLAYS]

NARRATOR: WORKING
WITH PRODUCER TONY BROWN,

GILL CAME OUT WITH AN ALBUM THAT
INCLUDED A WESTERN SWING DUET

WITH FELLOW OKLAHOMAN
REBA McENTIRE

AND SONGS HE HAD CO-WRITTEN
WITH ROSANNE CASH AND GUY CLARK.

THE ALBUM'S TITLE SONG
"WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME"

WAS ONE GILL HAD CO-WRITTEN
WITH TIM DuBOIS.

GILL: "A LIFE WAS CHANGED

" 'CAUSE NOBODY ANSWERS

" WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME

" OH, THE LONELY SOUND...

GILL: AT THE END OF THE DAY,
ALL I'VE EVER WANTED

OUT OF MUSIC WAS TO BE MOVED.

ALL I WANTED SOMEONE TO DO
WAS PLAY SOMETHING

THAT JUST MAKES ME GO, "OH!"

I LOVE THE--I LOVE
THE EMOTION OF MUSIC.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING
THAT IT DOES TO MY DNA

THAT I CAN'T EXPLAIN.

NARRATOR: THAT SAME YEAR, GILL
BEGAN WORK ON ANOTHER SONG

THAT WAS EVEN MORE PERSONAL.

IN HIS EARLY BLUEGRASS DAYS,
GILL HAD PLAYED

IN A BAND WITH RICKY SKAGGS

AND HIS BEST FRIEND
KEITH WHITLEY.

WHITLEY WAS
A RISING COUNTRY STAR,

MARRIED TO THE SINGER
LORRIE MORGAN,

AND MANY PEOPLE BELIEVED
THE YOUNG COUPLE WOULD BE

THE NEXT GEORGE JONES
AND TAMMY WYNETTE.

WHITLEY:
"THE DEVIL, GOT DOWN...

NARRATOR:
BUT WHITLEY WAS AN ALCOHOLIC.

SOMETIMES, HIS WIFE TIED
THEIR LEGS TOGETHER AT NIGHT

SO HE COULDN'T SNEAK OFF
TO DRINK SOME MORE.

WHITLEY: "I'M NO STRANGER
TO THE RAIN"

"I CAN SPOT BAD WEATHER

"AND I'M GOOD
AT FINDING SHELTER..."

NARRATOR: ON MAY 9, 1989, WHILE
SHE WAS PERFORMING ON THE ROAD,

HE WAS DISCOVERED AT HOME,
DEAD FROM ALCOHOL POISONING

AT AGE 33.

LIKE MANY OTHERS IN NASHVILLE,

VINCE GILL WAS DEVASTATED
BY THE NEWS.

["GO REST HIGH ON THAT MOUNTAIN"
BY VINCE GILL PLAYS]

IN HIS GRIEF,
HE BEGAN WRITING A SONG,

"GO REST HIGH ON THAT MOUNTAIN."

GILL: AND SO THAT FIRST VERSE
OF "GO REST HIGH"

WAS REALLY, UM, MORE CENTERED
AROUND KEITH, YOU KNOW?

JUST WITH THE WORDS OF...

[PLAYS GUITAR]

"I KNOW YOUR LIFE ON EARTH
WAS TROUBLED

"AND ONLY YOU CAN
KNOW THE PAIN,

"YOU WEREN'T AFRAID
TO FACE THE DEVIL

YOU WERE NO STRANGER
TO THE RAIN."

GILL: "I KNOW YOUR LIFE

" ON EARTH WAS TROUBLED

" AND ONLY YOU

" COULD KNOW THE PAIN

" YOU WEREN'T AFRAID
TO FACE THE DEVIL "

" YOU WERE NO STRANGER
TO THE RAIN "

AND THEN I JUST--I PUT IT DOWN.

I DIDN'T FINISH IT,

AND, UM, I FELT A LITTLE UNEASY
ABOUT IT FOR SOME REASON.

I DON'T KNOW WHY,

AND I NEVER--I NEVER KEPT GOING,

AND THEN I LOST MY BROTHER,
LIKE, 4 YEARS LATER,

AND I REMEMBERED, YOU KNOW,
AND IT--ALL OF A SUDDEN,

I REMEMBERED THAT VERSE,
AND I SAID, "THAT WAS THE--

IT WAS--
MY BROTHER HAD THAT STORY."

YOU KNOW, MY BROTHER REALLY
STRUGGLED IN HIS LIFE,

AND I PULLED THAT OUT

AND THEN WENT ON

AND--AND FINISHED THAT SONG.

â GO REST HIGH
ON THAT MOUNTAIN â

â 'CAUSE, SON, YOUR WORK
ON EARTH IS DONE â

â GO TO HEAVEN A-SHOUTIN'

â LOVE FOR THE FATHER
AND THE SON â

â GO TO HEAVEN A-SHOUTIN'

â LOVE FOR THE FATHER
AND THE SON â

â GO REST HIGH
ON THAT MOUNTAIN â

NARRATOR: WITH RICKY SKAGGS
AND COUNTRY STAR PATTY LOVELESS

SINGING HARMONY,
GILL RELEASED THE SONG.

IN TIME, "GO REST HIGH
ON THAT MOUNTAIN" WOULD BECOME

A CLASSIC, JOINING
"AMAZING GRACE"

AND "WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN" AS A SONG

PEOPLE REQUEST
WHEN THEY'VE LOST A LOVED ONE.

â LOVE FOR THE FATHER
AND THE SON â

â OH, HOW WE CRIED

â THE DAY YOU LEFT US

â WE GATHERED ROUND

[VOICE BREAKING]
â YOUR GRAVE TO GRIEVE...

NARRATOR: NEARLY 25 YEARS
AFTER HE FIRST

STARTED WRITING IT, VINCE GILL

WOULD BE ASKED TO SING IT

AT GEORGE JONES'
MEMORIAL SERVICE

AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY HOUSE.

THAT DAY, OVERCOME BY EMOTION,

HE HAD TROUBLE
FINISHING IT AGAIN.

â YOUR SWEET VOICE SING

LOVELESS: â OHH

BOTH: â GO REST HIGH
ON THAT MOUNTAIN â

â SON, YOUR--

â WORK ON EARTH

â IS DONE

NARRATOR:
PATTY LOVELESS TRIED TO HELP.

BOTH: â GO TO

â HEAVEN A-SHOUTIN'

â LORD ABOVE

â LOVE FOR THE FATHER
AND THE S-- â

â AND THE SON

â

â

NARRATOR: THE SAME NIGHT THAT
JON VEZNER FIRST SANG

"WHERE'VE YOU BEEN"
AT THE BLUEBIRD CAFE,

ANOTHER SINGER/SONGWRITER
ALSO PERFORMED THERE.

HIS NAME WAS GARTH BROOKS.

HE HAD GROWN UP
IN YUKON, OKLAHOMA,

IN THE 1960s AND 1970s,
THE LAST OF 6 CHILDREN.

HE WAS EXPOSED TO EVERY KIND
OF MUSIC--

THE COUNTRY STARS LIKE
GEORGE JONES AND MERLE HAGGARD

HIS PARENTS LIKED

AND THE YOUNGER ARTISTS
HIS OLDER SIBLINGS LISTENED TO.

BROOKS: BANDS LIKE THE EAGLES,
GUYS LIKE JAMES TAYLOR.

HERE COMES EVERYTHING
FROM TOWNES VAN ZANDT

TO TOM RUSH,

EVERYTHING FROM JANIS JOPLIN
TO EMMYLOU HARRIS.

ALABAMA: "LAUGH
WITH OLD HUCK FINN"

NARRATOR: BROOKS WENT
TO OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

ON A TRACK SCHOLARSHIP,
WORKED AS A BOUNCER

AT A LOCAL NIGHT SPOT,
AND FORMED HIS OWN BAND,

LEARNING TO PLAY WHATEVER
THE COLLEGE AUDIENCE WANTED--

KISS, QUEEN, AND ALABAMA.

"I PLAYED MORE ALABAMA,"
HE SAID, "THAN ALABAMA."

IN 1987, HE MOVED TO NASHVILLE,
BEGAN MAKING THE ROUNDS

AT PUBLISHERS AND RECORD LABELS,

AND PLAYED AT THE BLUEBIRD
WHENEVER THEY WOULD LET HIM.

KURLAND: AND HE CAME IN
FOR THE AUDITION,

AND HE BLEW ME AND EVERYBODY

ELSE IN THE ROOM AWAY.

I DON'T REMEMBER THE NAME
OF THE SONG RIGHT OFFHAND,

BUT I DO REMEMBER THAT IT WAS
ABOUT LOVING A WOMAN,

PUTTING HER UP ON A PEDESTAL,
AND I'M THINKING,

"I WANT TO BE THAT WOMAN."

THEN HE CAME BACK AND PLAYED
THE WRITERS NIGHT

MAYBE A MONTH OR SO LATER,

AND, UH, AGAIN, THE AUDIENCE
WAS JUST BLOWN AWAY.

UM, I THINK IT'S THE FIRST TIME
I EVER SAW A STANDING OVATION

IN THE MIDDLE OF A SONG.

YOU KNOW, END
OF THE FIRST CHORUS,

AND PEOPLE WERE, LIKE,
GOING CRAZY.

NARRATOR: BUT BY THE SPRING
OF 1988, BROOKS

HAD BEEN REJECTED
BY EVERY RECORD LABEL

IN MUSIC CITY.

HE WAS BACK AT THE BLUEBIRD
ALONG WITH JON VEZNER.

BROOKS: "SOMETIMES,
LATE AT NIGHT..."

NARRATOR: HE BEGAN SINGING
A SONG HE HAD CO-WRITTEN,

"IF TOMORROW NEVER COMES."

BROOKS: "IF I NEVER WAKE UP
IN THE MORNING..."

NARRATOR: SITTING
IN THE AUDIENCE WAS

AN EXECUTIVE
FOR CAPITOL RECORDS.

ONLY A FEW DAYS EARLIER,
HE HAD PASSED

ON SIGNING GARTH BROOKS,
BUT SOMETHING

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE
AT THE BLUEBIRD THAT NIGHT

CHANGED HIS MIND.

BROOKS: "IF TOMORROW
NEVER COMES"

"WILL SHE KNOW HOW MUCH
I LOVED HER?"

"DID I TRY IN EVERY WAY

"TO SHOW HER
EVERY DAY"

"THAT SHE'S MY ONLY ONE?"

"OH, OH..."

NARRATOR: WITH A MODEST ADVANCE
OF \$10,000,

BROOKS WAS ASSIGNED
TO A PRODUCER

TO CREATE HIS FIRST ALBUM.

IT WAS ALLEN REYNOLDS.

THEIR INITIAL SESSION GOT OFF
TO A ROCKY START.

REYNOLDS: SO THERE WAS A MOMENT
WHEN HE WAS DOING--

I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT SONG,
BUT IT DIDN'T SOUND--

IT SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE ELSE.

IT DIDN'T SOUND LIKE
GARTH TO ME,

AND I QUESTIONED HIM
ABOUT IT,

AND HE SAID, "WELL, I'M TRYING

TO PUT A LITTLE OF THAT

GEORGE STRAIT THING IN THERE."

BROOKS: "HOW MUCH I LOVED...

REYNOLDS: I JUST STOPPED
EVERYTHING RIGHT THEN

AND SAID, "LOOK. WE'VE ALREADY
GOT A GEORGE STRAIT.

"WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER ONE,

"AND WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO IS
GET THE BEST

GARTH BROOKS TO STEP FORWARD."

AND HE SAYS, "LOOK, MAN.
JUST BE YOURSELF."

HE SAYS, "THAT WAY,
IF YOU'RE YOURSELF,

"THERE'S NEVER BEEN
ANYBODY ELSE LIKE YOU,

"AND ANYBODY THAT COMES
AFTER YOU IS

"GOING TO BE CALLED A COPYCAT.

"SO JUST BE YOURSELF,
AND IF IT DOESN'T WORK,

"THEN YOU GO DOWN BEING TRUE
TO YOURSELF,

AND THAT'S WHO YOU HAVE TO LIVE
WITH THE REST OF YOUR LIFE."

NARRATOR: AT THE SAME TIME
GARTH BROOKS CAME

ONTO THE SCENE,
ANOTHER GENERATION

OF YOUNG ARTISTS WAS BEGINNING
TO MAKE ITS MARK.

ALAN JACKSON, A LANKY
SINGER/SONGWRITER FROM GEORGIA,

WHO HAD BEEN WORKING
IN THE MAILROOM AT TNN

FOR 4 YEARS, FINALLY GOT
TO RECORD HIS OWN ALBUM.

A FORMER CONSTRUCTION WORKER
AND PART-TIME BAR SINGER

FROM HOUSTON, CLINT BLACK
BROKE OUT

WITH HIS SONG, "KILLIN' TIME."

TRAVIS TRITT REJECTED
THE PREVAILING COWBOY IMAGE

AND EMBRACED A HILLBILLY LOOK

AND A HONKY TONK SOUND
WITH SONGS LIKE

"HERE'S A QUARTER
(CALL SOMEONE WHO CARES)."

HE AND HIS FRIEND MARTY STUART
WENT ON WHAT THEY CALLED

A "NO HATS" TOUR
THAT WAS A HUGE SUCCESS.

BROOKS:
"I WAS THE LAST ONE..."

NARRATOR: BUT GARTH BROOKS
WOULD SURPASS THEM ALL.

"I DIDN'T MEAN..."

NARRATOR: OUT ON THE ROAD,
HE COULD HOLD

AN AUDIENCE SPELLBOUND
WITH HIS SOULFUL BALLADS,

BUT HE ABSOLUTELY TORE THEM UP
WITH HIS ROCKING SONGS.

HE APPLIED WHAT HE HAD LEARNED
PLAYING IN COLLEGE BARS

AND IN WATCHING THE ROCK BANDS
HE HAD IDOLIZED GROWING UP.

"THE WHISKEY DROWNS

AND THE BEER CHASES
MY BLUES AWAY"

TRISHA YEARWOOD: HE DIDN'T WALK

OUT THERE AND STAND

IN ONE SPOT.

BROOKS: "NOT BIG
ON SOCIAL GRACES..."

THERE'S NOTHING POP
ABOUT GARTH BROOKS.

HE'S JUST--HIS SHOW IS POP,

BUT HIS MUSIC IS "COUNTRY"
THAN I'LL EVER BE.

BROOKS: "IN LOW PLACES

EVERYBODY!

"I GOT FRIENDS IN LOW

AUDIENCE: "PLACES

"WHERE THE WHISKEY DROWNS
AND THE BEER..."

RUCKER: "FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES,"

THAT'S WHAT KIND OF SONG
YOU WANT TO WRITE.

YOU WANT TO WRITE
A BIG DRINKING SONG LIKE THAT,

WHERE--WHERE EVERYBODY'S
IN THE BAR SINGING IT

AT THE SAME TIME.

EVEN PEOPLE THAT DON'T KNOW IT,
BY THE SECOND CHORUS,

THEY KNOW IT.

AUDIENCE: "LOW PLACES

BROOKS: YEEEEAAAAH!

"I GOT FRIENDS
IN LOW PLACES"

"THINK I'LL SLIP ON DOWN
TO THE OASIS"

"OH, I GOT FRIENDS

"IN LOW PLACES

â OH, I'VE GOT FRIENDS

â IN LOW PLACES

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: PROPELLED
BY THE ASTONISHING POPULARITY

OF "FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES,"
BROOKS' SECOND ALBUM

SOLD 700,000 COPIES
IN JUST 10 DAYS

AND REACHED NUMBER 4
ON THE POP CHARTS.

IT WOULD SOON BECOME
THE FIRST COUNTRY ALBUM

TO HIT 5 MILLION IN SALES.

HIS THIRD ALBUM WOULD DEBUT
AT NUMBER ONE ON THE POP CHARTS,

ANOTHER FIRST
FOR A COUNTRY ARTIST,

AND SELL MORE THAN
8 MILLION COPIES.

REYNOLDS: AND HE DID THIS
WITHOUT EVER ONCE ALLOWING

HIS RECORD LABEL TO PROMOTE
HIS RECORDS

ACROSS INTO OTHER MARKETS,

LIKE THE POP MARKET
AND ALL THAT.

HE FELT LIKE HIS LOYALTY
WAS TO COUNTRY RADIO,

AND HIS ATTITUDE WAS,
"LET THEM COME TO US,"

YOU KNOW?

"LET'S BE SO GOOD AT WHAT WE DO

THAT THEY COME TO US."

MATTEA: AND ALL OF A SUDDEN,

IT WAS LIKE

THIS GUY IS SELLING OUT
THE STADIUMS AND DOING SPECIALS,

LIKE, BLOWING THE TOPS OFF
RECORD SALES ACROSS THE BOARD,

AND HE'S ONE OF US.

NARRATOR: IN 1993, BROOKS
ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD BE DOING

A CONCERT AT TEXAS STADIUM.

ALL 65,675 SEATS WERE SOLD OUT
WITHIN 92 MINUTES...

HELLO, TEXAS!

BEATING A PREVIOUS RECORD
HELD BY PAUL McCARTNEY.

A SECOND SHOW WAS ADDED
AND SOLD OUT IN THE SAME TIME.

SO DID A THIRD.

ANGERED WHEN HE HEARD
ABOUT THE EXTRAVAGANT PRICES

BEING CHARGED BY SCALPERS,
BROOKS ANNOUNCED

A FOURTH CONCERT
WITH FREE TICKETS.

THE 4 CONCERTS WERE LIKE NOTHING

ANY COUNTRY STAR
HAD EVER DELIVERED.

BROOKS: LET'S GET ON IT
AND RAISE SOME HELL!

NARRATOR: IN FRONT
OF THE MASSIVE CROWD,

PREPARING FOR THE BIGGEST STUNT
HE HAD EVER ATTEMPTED,

HE REMEMBERED THE FIRST
QUEEN CONCERT HE ATTENDED

WHEN HE WAS 17.

BROOKS: "A LIFE IS NOT TRIED,

IT IS MERELY SURVIVED â€”^a

BROOKS, VOICE-OVER:
I'M STANDING ON MY CHAIR,

AND ALL I WANT THAT WHOLE NIGHT
IS FOR FREDDIE MERCURY

TO LOOK AT ME FOR 3 SECONDS,
SO I CAN GO...

[WHISPERS]
"THANK YOU, DUDE. THANK YOU.

"IT'S WHAT I LISTEN TO
BEFORE I PLAY FOOTBALL.

"IT'S WHAT I LISTEN TO
WHEN I'M DOWN.

THANK YOU.
THANK YOU."

AND IT WAS FUNNY.

YOU START TO GET TO DO THIS
FOR A LIVING,

YOU'RE THE GUY THAT GETS
TO DO IT FOR A LIVING,

AND NOW ALL I DO IS SCAN
THE AUDIENCE EVERY NIGHT

FOR THAT 3 SECONDS
TO GO, "THANK YOU.

"THANK YOU.
COOLEST GIG EVER.

THANK YOU."

PRETTY COOL.

BROOKS: YEAH!

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: STARTING IN 1991,
"BILLBOARD" MAGAZINE

HAD INSTITUTED A NEW WAY
OF GAUGING A RECORD'S SUCCESS.

INSTEAD OF TAKING
A TELEPHONE POLL

OF RECORD STORE CLERKS,
IT NOW RELIED ON SOUNDSCAN,

WHICH USED BARCODES TO KEEP
TRACK OF ACTUAL SALES.

WHAT THE NEW SYSTEM PROVED WAS
THAT GARTH BROOKS

AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES WERE
DOING EVEN BETTER

THAN ANYONE HAD IMAGINED.

YEARWOOD: IF YOU WERE MAKING
COUNTRY MUSIC RECORDS

IN THE NINETIES,
YOU WERE SELLING RECORDS,

AND IT WAS LARGELY DUE TO GARTH.

NARRATOR: BETWEEN 1989 AND 1991,
SALES OF COUNTRY MUSIC

HAD DOUBLED FROM \$460 MILLION
TO NEARLY \$1 BILLION.

THEN BETWEEN 1991 AND 1994,
THEY DOUBLED AGAIN.

IN 1995 ALONE, 27 COUNTRY ALBUMS
EACH SOLD MORE THAN

A MILLION COPIES
AND WENT PLATINUM.

RADIO STATIONS PLAYING
COUNTRY MUSIC ATTRACTED

SOME 70 MILLION LISTENERS,
THE BIGGEST FORMAT

ON THE AIRWAVES.

FROM CANADA,
SHANIA TWAIN BURST

ONTO THE SCENE
WITH A SASSY PERSONA

AND PERFORMANCE STYLE THAT
FILLED BIG ARENAS

AND SOLD RECORDS
IN THE TENS OF MILLIONS

AS SHE EDGED HER VERSION
OF COUNTRY MUSIC

FURTHER TOWARD POP AND ROCK.

MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER
FROM PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY,

WAS MORE FOLK-ORIENTED BUT STILL
HAD 5 PLATINUM ALBUMS.

YEARWOOD: "KATIE'S SITTING
ON HER OLD FRONT PORCH"

NARRATOR: WHEN TRISHA YEARWOOD
ARRIVED IN NASHVILLE IN 1985,

IT WAS THE FARTHEST
SHE HAD EVER BEEN FROM HOME,

THE TINY TOWN
OF MONTICELLO, GEORGIA,

ONLY 300 MILES AWAY.

YEARWOOD: "OVER YONDER
COMING UP THE ROAD..."

YOU KNOW, I HAD GROWN UP
ON THE CLASSIC WOMEN OF COUNTRY.

I LISTENED TO PATSY,
I LISTENED TO LORETTA,

I LISTENED TO TAMMY WYNETTE.

WHEN I HEARD REBA,
IT WAS KIND OF

"THIS IS THE NEXT STEP FOR ME."

IF LORETTA AND TAMMY OPENED
THE DOOR FOR REBA,

REBA OPENED THE DOOR FOR ME.

YEARWOOD: "WHEN IT COMES
TO BRAINS..."

NARRATOR: BEFORE HIS CAREER
TOOK OFF,

GARTH BROOKS AND YEARWOOD HAD
WORKED TOGETHER,

SINGING ON DEMO TAPES
FOR \$10 TO \$20 A SONG.

NOW BROOKS INVITED HER TO BE
THE OPENING ACT

ON ONE OF HIS TOURS
AS SHE PROMOTED HER FIRST ALBUM.

ITS SIGNATURE SONG,
"SHE'S IN LOVE WITH THE BOY,"

HIT NUMBER ONE
ON THE COUNTRY CHARTS.

YEARWOOD: "HER DADDY SAYS,
"HE AIN'T WORTH A LICK"

"WHEN IT COMES TO BRAINS"

"HE GOT THE SHORT END
OF THE STICK"

BUT KATIE'S YOUNG,
AND, MAN, SHE JUST DON'T CARE

SHE'D FOLLOW
TOMMY ANYWHERE

SHE'S IN LOVE
WITH THE BOY

WHAT'S MEANT TO BE
WILL ALWAYS FIND A WAY

SHE'S GONNA MARRY
THAT BOY SOMEDAY

NARRATOR: 14 YEARS LATER,
YEARWOOD AND BROOKS WOULD MARRY.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

FOR THE RECORD LABELS,
THE EXPECTATIONS THAT DEFINED

SUCCESS IN COUNTRY MUSIC
HAD BALLOONED,

BUT THE EXPECTATIONS
OF COUNTRY FANS WERE UNCHANGED--

"DON'T GET ABOVE YOUR RAISIN'."

FOR MANY YEARS,
THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

HAD HOSTED FAN FAIR,
A CHANCE FOR PEOPLE TO HEAR

SOME LIVE MUSIC BUT MOST OF ALL
TO MEET THEIR FAVORITE STARS

AND GET THEIR AUTOGRAPH.

BROOKS: "AROUND THE BEND,
SLOWING DOWN, SHE'S JUMPING..."

NARRATOR: AT THE PEAK
OF HIS UNPRECEDENTED POPULARITY,

GARTH BROOKS SHOWED UP,
NOT TO PLAY BUT TO SIGN.

YEARWOOD: HE WENT
OUT THERE UNANNOUNCED.

HE DROVE UP IN HIS TRUCK.

HE GOT OUT OF HIS TRUCK,
AND HE WENT AND STOOD

UNDER, YOU KNOW,
A TENT SOMEWHERE,

NOT A GARTH BROOKS BOOTH,
NOT--AND JUST STOOD THERE.

MATTEA: AND USUALLY,
YOU HAVE A WINDOW,

AND EVERYONE KNOWS WHEN IT IS,

AND SO THAT PEOPLE
DON'T GET DISAPPOINTED,

YOU HAVE SOMEONE STAND
AT THE END OF THE LINE

AND SAY, "LOOK. WHEN--THIS IS
THE LAST PERSON.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO
TAKE ANY MORE,"

BUT GARTH JUST DIDN'T STOP.

HE JUST DECIDED HE WAS GOING TO
SIGN UNTIL EVERYBODY WAS DONE.

YEARWOOD: AND HE STOOD THERE.

HE DIDN'T LEAVE THAT SPOT FOR--
IT WAS OVER 20 HOURS.

BROOKS: "AIN'T GOIN' DOWN

'TIL THE SUN COMES UP

AIN'T GIVIN' IN
'TIL THEY GET ENOUGH

GOIN' ROUND THE WORLD
IN A PICKUP TRUCK

AIN'T GOIN' DOWN
'TIL THE SUN COMES UP

DIERKS BENTLEY:
MINNIE PEARL, YOU KNOW,

"LOVE THEM,
AND THEY'LL LOVE YOU BACK."

THAT WAS ALWAYS HER ADVICE
ABOUT COUNTRY MUSIC FANS.

YOU LOVE YOUR FANS
IN COUNTRY MUSIC,

AND THEY WILL LOVE YOU BACK.

THEY'RE NOT JUST INVESTING
IN A SONG.

THEY'RE INVESTING
IN YOU AS A PERSON.

IT ALL GOES BACK TO THE SONGS.

THEY GET WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC
OF PEOPLE'S LIVES,

AND THEY ASSOCIATE YOU
WITH THAT SONG.

YOU REALLY FEEL LIKE
YOU KNOW THEM,

EVEN IF YOU'VE NEVER MET
THEM BEFORE,

MATTEA: I DON'T REALLY
KNOW WHY IT--

THIS STARTED,
BUT IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING.

PART OF THE JOURNEY
OF BEING A COUNTRY MUSIC STAR,

YOU GO TALK TO YOUR FANS.

YOU SIGN AUTOGRAPHS.

YOU LOOK THEM IN THE EYE.

WHEN YOU LOOK THOSE PEOPLE
IN THE EYE,

THEY ARE YOU,
AND YOU ARE THEM.

THERE IS NO BEING ABOVE.

PEOPLE COME THROUGH,
AND THEY'RE LIKE,

"THIS SONG CHANGED MY LIFE."

"I HAD THIS SONG SUNG
IN MY WEDDING."

"MY GRANDMOTHER DIED
THE SAME WAY."

THERE WAS A MOMENT
WHERE I WAS SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS,

AND THIS WOMAN JUST WALKED UP
TO ME IN THE LINE,

AND SHE JUST LOOKED AT ME,
AND I LOOKED AT HER,

AND SHE DIDN'T SAY A WORD,
AND SHE JUST STARTED CRYING,

TEARS JUST CAME DOWN HER FACE,

AND...AND I JUST LOOKED AT HER,

AND SHE LOOKED AT ME,
AND SHE JUST WENT...

AND I WENT...

AND WE JUST HUGGED.

AND HER HUS--AND HER HUSBAND
JUST LEANED DOWN,

AND HE GRABBED HER ARM
WHEN SHE--

THEY WERE WALKING AWAY,
AND HE SAID,

"SHE BURIED HER MOM
THIS MORNING,

BUT SHE REALLY WANTED TO COME
AND SEE YOU TONIGHT."

AND...I MEAN,
THAT'S IT, YOU KNOW?

THAT'S IT.
THAT'S COUNTRY MUSIC.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

REYNOLDS: RECORD LABELS HAVE
A TERRIBLE TENDENCY TO CHASE

WHATEVER IS THE CURRENT HIT.

I MEAN, I HAVE ALWAYS SAID
THAT MARKETING MEN WOULD CLONE

TODAY'S NUMBER ONE FOREVER
WITHOUT A SENSE OF GUILT

IF THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH IT,

UH, JUST BECAUSE
IT WOULD ELIMINATE RISK.

[FIREWORKS EXPLODE]

NARRATOR: COUNTRY MUSIC MAY HAVE
BEEN BIGGER THAN EVER,

BUT BY THE MID-1990s,
RECORD SALES WERE CONCENTRATED

ON A SMALLER AND SMALLER NUMBER
OF NEW RELEASES.

EXECUTIVES AT THE LABELS
IN NASHVILLE WERE

UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE
TO ONLY PRODUCE ALBUMS

THAT SOLD IN THE MILLIONS.

[PLAYING "ACHY BREAKY HEART"]

CROWELL:
EXPECTATIONS BECAME PART

OF THE CREATIVE DECISION MAKING.

BILLY RAY CYRUS: "YOU CAN TELL
THE WORLD... "

"YOU NEVER WAS MY GIRL

THAT MEANS THAT
THE RECORD COMPANIES'

BOTTOM LINE HAD RISEN
TO SUCH GREAT HEIGHTS

WITH THE LIKES OF GARTH BROOKS
AND SHANIA TWAIN

THAT THEIR SHAREHOLDERS
WERE NEVER GOING TO BE HAPPY

IF THEY WERE OUT TRYING
TO DEVELOP A NEW ACT

WHO SOLD 1/5 OR 1/100
OF WHAT THOSE ARTISTS SOLD.

IT JUST WASN'T GOING TO HAPPEN.

CYRUS: OH!

NARRATOR: THEN A CHANGE
IN FEDERAL LAW ALLOWED

LARGE COMPANIES TO CONSOLIDATE
THEIR OWNERSHIP

OF RADIO STATIONS
ACROSS THE NATION.

DECISIONS ON WHAT SONGS
WOULD BE BROADCAST

WERE BEING MADE BY FEWER PEOPLE.

PLAYLISTS GOT SHORTER.

IT BECAME EVEN HARDER
FOR NEW ARTISTS TO BREAK IN

AND HARDER FOR MANY ESTABLISHED
ARTISTS TO HOLD ON.

EDDIE STUBBS: THE DAYS
OF AN ARTIST DROPPING IN

TO SEE A DISC JOCKEY,

LIKE WAS THE CASE
WITH LORETTA LYNN,

THOSE DAYS ARE VIRTUALLY GONE.

REYNOLDS: AND NOW INSTEAD OF
HAVING A LOT OF POSSIBILITIES

TO GET TO TRY
YOUR RECORD OUT

AND SEE IF THE PUBLIC
WILL RESPOND,

YOU'RE GOING THROUGH THE EYE
OF THE NEEDLE, ONE PERSON

WHO IS PROGRAMMING FOR 1,300,
1,400 STATIONS,

AND HIS SAY-SO IS "THE" SAY-SO,

AND IF HE SAYS, "NO,"
THAT'S IT.

EMMYLOU HARRIS: I WAS DOING
AN INTERVIEW

AT A COUNTRY RADIO STATION.

I HAD AN ALBUM OUT,
AND LORETTA LYNN

HAD JUST BEEN INDUCTED INTO
THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME,

AND I SAID, "OH, THIS IS
SO FANTASTIC.

"SO, YOU KNOW, LET'S PLAY
SOMETHING BY LORETTA LYNN."

HE SAID, "OH, WE CAN'T DO THAT

BECAUSE SHE'S NOT
ON OUR PLAYLIST."

NARRATOR: SOME INDEPENDENT
STATIONS STILL EXISTED

AND CONTINUED FEATURING
ALTERNATIVE COUNTRY ARTISTS,

AS WELL AS THE CLASSICS.

TO PROVE THAT THIS MUSIC
STILL HAD AN AUDIENCE,

A NEW TERM HAD TO BE INVENTED,
WITH ITS OWN CHART

AND LATER ITS OWN AWARDS.

IT WAS CALLED AMERICANA.

["BORN TO RUN"
BY EMMYLOU HARRIS PLAYS]

NARRATOR: NO ONE WAS MORE
SUPPORTIVE

OF THE NEW MOVEMENT
THAN EMMYLOU HARRIS.

HARRIS: "WELL, I NEVER DID...

NARRATOR: 20 YEARS EARLIER,
WHEN SHE BECAME A CONVERT

TO COUNTRY MUSIC,
HER BEST-SELLING ALBUMS,

FEATURING SONGS BY OLDER STARS,

HAD SHONE A SPOTLIGHT ON WHAT
WAS BEING OVERLOOKED.

"EVERY SO OFTEN,"
JOHNNY CASH TOLD A REPORTER,

"COUNTRY HAS TO GET BACK
TO EMMYLOU HARRIS."

GILL: SHE MADE PEOPLE
REMEMBER BUCK OWENS.

SHE MADE PEOPLE REMEMBER
MERLE HAGGARD

AND MADE
PEOPLE REMEMBER KITTY WELLS,

THE LOUVIN BROTHERS.

YOU KNOW, EVERY NOW AND THEN,
THERE'S SOMEONE

IN A STRETCH OF LIFE THAT'S
GOING TO BE THE GREAT CONDUIT

TO CONNECT YOU BACK
TO WHERE WE COME FROM.

HARRIS: "I WAS BORN
IN THIS HOUSE "

" I WAS BORN TO RUN

NARRATOR: BY THE 1990s,
HARRIS DECIDED TO DO

AN ALL-ACOUSTIC ALBUM.

TO RECORD IT, SHE CHOSE
THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM,

WHICH HAD BEEN CLOSED
SINCE THE EARLY 1970s.

STUART: IT WAS JUST
AN OLD BUILDING

WHERE THE GRAND OLE OPRY
USED TO BE

AND WITH AN OLD HISTORY
THAT WAS TIRED,

AND THE WINDOWS WERE BROKEN OUT,
AND PIGEONS WERE FLYING AROUND,

AND THEY CONDUCTED \$2.00 TOURS.

NARRATOR: WHEN HARRIS
AND HER BAND RECORDED

THEIR LIVE ALBUM
AT THE DECAYING RYMAN,

THE CROWD THAT WAS PERMITTED TO
WITNESS IT WAS RESTRICTED--

FOR SAFETY REASONS--
TO ONLY 200 PEOPLE,

ALL GATHERED NEAR THE STAGE
TO MAKE IT APPEAR

THAT THE AUDIENCE
WAS MUCH LARGER.

â YOU'VE BEEN CHOSEN

â JOHN

â GO ON AFRAID
â JOHN

â I'LL GO WITH YOU

â JOHN THE BAPTIST

â THIS IS THE DAY

NARRATOR: THE ONLY GUEST SHE
INVITED TO PERFORM WITH HER

WAS BILL MONROE, THE AGING

PATRIARCH OF BLUEGRASS,

WHO HAD FIRST APPEARED
ON THE RYMAN STAGE BACK IN 1939.

[PLAYING "SCOTLAND"]

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

HARRIS: FOR COUNTRY MUSIC,
PERHAPS IT'S A REMINDER

OF US OF WHERE WE
ALL CAME FROM

AND NOT TO FORGET THAT,

NOT TO JUST CONSTANTLY BE
RECYCLING THAT

AND TRYING TO GO BACK
'CAUSE YOU CAN'T GO BACK.

YOU KNOW, WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT.
EVERY GENERATION IS DIFFERENT,

BUT WE MUSTN'T FORGET
WHERE WE CAME FROM

BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO MAKE
THE MUSIC THAT WE MAKE

IN THE FUTURE BETTER.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: THE EVENT
AND THE ALBUM THAT IT PRODUCED

REMINDED PEOPLE OF THE RYMAN'S
INCOMPARABLE ACOUSTICS,

AS WELL AS ITS PLACE
IN MUSIC HISTORY.

HARRIS AND OTHERS JOINED
A CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE RYMAN

FROM DESTRUCTION,
AND THE OWNERS OF WSM

AND THE GRAND OLE OPRY INVESTED
MORE THAN \$8 MILLION

TO COMPLETELY RESTORE IT.

â^a

THE MOTHER CHURCH
OF COUNTRY MUSIC REOPENED

AS A PERFORMANCE VENUE IN 1994
WITH LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS,

PORTER WAGONER, AND MARTY STUART
CUTTING THE RIBBON.

[CAMERA SHUTTER CLICKS]

STUART: I LOVED THAT OLD MAN,

AND TOWARD THE END OF HIS LIFE,
I THOUGHT,

"I WANT TO GO HANG OUT
WITH HIM ONE MORE TIME

"AND JUST SPEND
THE AFTERNOON WITH HIM,

TAKING PICTURES."

AND AT THE END OF IT ALL,
WE WERE STANDING BY HIS BARN,

JUST ME AND HIM, PLAYING
MANDOLINS.

[PLAYING "BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY"
ON MANDOLIN]

SKAGGS: BUT I COULD TELL
IN HIS LAST FEW, FEW DAYS

THAT, UH, HE WAS
REALLY CONCERNED

ABOUT WHERE BLUEGRASS WAS GOING,
WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO IT.

YOU KNOW, WHERE'S IT
GOING TO END UP?

AND I JUST SAID,
"MR. MONROE, LISTEN.

"THIS MUSIC IS BIGGER THAN YOU.

"IT'S BIGGER THAN YOU.

"YOU GOT TO HEAR IT FIRST.

"YOU GOT TO
PLAY IT FIRST,

"AND YOU GOT TO SOW GREAT SEEDS
WITH THIS MUSIC.

"I'M PART OF YOUR SEED.

"MARTY'S PART OF
YOUR SEED.

"VINCE IS PART
OF YOUR SEED.

"ALL OF US THAT LOVE BLUEGRASS
ARE PART OF YOUR SEED,

"AND IT'S NEVER GOING TO DIE,

"SO YOU CAN GO HOME
AND REST IN PEACE.

"DON'T WORRY ABOUT
WHERE THE MUSIC'S GOING.

"WE'RE ALL--WE'RE GOING TO
TAKE CARE OF IT.

JUST BE FREE."

YES. I MADE A PROMISE TO HIM
THAT I WOULD PLAY

THIS MUSIC
ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE

AND I WOULD ALWAYS TELL PEOPLE
WHERE IT CAME FROM.

â

["BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY"
BY BILL MONROE PLAYS]

â

â BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY,
KEEP ON SHINING... â

NARRATOR: RICKY SKAGGS,
MARTY STUART, AND VINCE GILL

WERE AMONG THE PERFORMERS
AT MONROE'S FUNERAL,

HELD AT THE RYMAN.

MONROE: â BLUE MOON
OF KENTUCKY... â

NARRATOR: IN THE WAKE
OF MONROE'S DEATH,

BOTH RICKY SKAGGS
AND MARTY STUART

WOULD REFOCUS THEIR CAREERS.

MONROE: "AND LEFT MY BLUE

SKAGGS: MR. MONROE
PASSED AWAY IN '96,

AND I JUST KEPT HEARING
THIS DEEP CALLING UNTO DEEP

THING IN ME,

AND IT WAS LIKE, YOU KNOW,

SIMPLE LIFE,
SIMPLE LIFE, SIMPLE LIFE,

AND I CAN TAKE
THESE ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS.

I DON'T HAVE TO HAVE
MICROPHONES.

I DON'T HAVE TO HAVE AMPS.

IF WE WANTED TO PULL
OFF THE ROAD AND GO

TO A LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE,
WE COULD GO PLAY

AND ENTERTAIN THE KIDS.

AND I WANTED TO TAKE IT BACK
TO THE FRONT PORCH,

AND, UH, SO THAT'S--
THAT'S WHAT I DID.

MONROE: "BLUE MOON
OF KENTUCKY..."

STUART: AND I FOUND OUT THAT
WHAT HAD HAPPENED

IS I HAD BECOME A--
A SUCCESS MACHINE.

I SIMPLY WANTED SUCCESS.

I WANTED TO BE ACCEPTED,
AND MY HEART GOT LEFT BEHIND,

AND ONE DAY I WAS RIDING
THROUGH THE WOODS,

AND I WAS NOTICING BARNS
AND COWS AND TRACTORS

AND CLOTHES BLOWING ON THE LINE
AND THE SMELL OF THE COUNTRY,

AND I LISTENED
TO THE KIND OF MUSIC

I WAS MAKING,
AND IT DID NOT LINE UP

WITH WHAT I WAS LOOKING AT.

AND THEN I WENT BACK AND STARTED
LISTENING TO THE CARTER FAMILY,

AND I LISTENED TO BILL MONROE
AND TAMMY WYNETTE

AND GEORGE JONES
AND HANK WILLIAMS,

AND I STARTED TO CRY.

MY HEART CAME BACK TO LIFE,
AND I WENT,

"I THINK I KNOW
WHAT I NEED TO DO.

"GO BACK TO MYSELF
AND START AGAIN

AND TAKE IT UP AGAIN."

MONROE: "AND THEY
WHISPERED FROM..."

NARRATOR: A YEAR LATER,
STUART WOULD MARRY

COUNTRY STAR CONNIE SMITH
JUST AS HE HAD PREDICTED

HE WOULD DO
WHEN HE WAS 11 YEARS OLD

AND GOT HER AUTOGRAPH
AT THE CHOCTAW INDIAN FAIR

IN MISSISSIPPI.

MONROE: "GONE
AND SAID GOOD-BYE"

["I STILL MISS SOMEONE"
BY BOBBY HORTON PLAYS]

ROSANNE CASH: I GREW UP THINKING
THAT BECOMING FAMOUS

WAS ABOUT THE WORST THING
THAT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU

BECAUSE THEN YOU HAD TO
GO ON THE ROAD,

AND IF YOU WENT ON THE ROAD,
YOU GOT DIVORCED,

AND YOU DIDN'T SEE YOUR KIDS,
AND YOU GOT ON DRUGS,

AND EVERYTHING FELL APART.

"

"

IT WAS SOMETHING KIND OF
INGRAINED IN US--

"THIS IS NOT
A GOOD WAY TO LIVE."

NARRATOR: AS HE AGED,
JOHNNY CASH HAD TAKEN

TO WRITING POIGNANT LETTERS
TO HIS DAUGHTERS,

ASKING THEM TO FORGIVE HIM
FOR HIS MANY ABSENCES.

HIS DAUGHTER ROSANNE
HAD MOVED TO NEW YORK CITY,

AND WHEN HER FATHER CAME
TO TOWN FOR A CONCERT,

HE ASKED HER IF SHE'D JOIN HIM
ONSTAGE FOR A SONG,

ONE HE HAD CO-WRITTEN
AND RECORDED BACK IN 1958,

"I STILL MISS SOMEONE."

AND I WAS MAD AT HIM
ABOUT SOMETHING, YOU KNOW,

SOME CHILDHOOD TRANSGRESSION
HE HAD COMMITTED

OR SOMETHING I WAS
GOING THROUGH,

SOMETHING HE HADN'T DONE.

I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER
WHAT IT WAS,

AND I WAS--VERY PETULANTLY SAID,
"NO. I DON'T THINK I WILL."

HA! CAN YOU IMAGINE?

AND HE SAID, "OK,"
AND HE TURNED,

AND HE WALKED OUT OF THE ROOM,

AND AS HE WALKED OUT,
I LOOKED AT HIS BACK,

AND I THOUGHT
OF THE THOUSANDS OF TIMES

I HAD SEEN HIS BACK FROM SITTING
IN THE WINGS OFFSTAGE

AND SEEN HIS BACK
WITH THE LIGHT COMING DOWN

ON HIM AND HIS GUITAR,

SO I SAID,
"DAD, I'LL DO IT."

SO THAT NIGHT, UM,
HE CALLED ME OUT,

AND WE SANG
"I STILL MISS SOMEONE" TOGETHER.

â AT MY DOOR,
THE LEAVES ARE FALLING â

â A COLD, WILD WIND
WILL COME â

â AND SWEETHEARTS
WALK BY TOGETHER â

â AND I STILL MISS SOMEONE

AND EVERYTHING GOT DISSOLVED.

EVERYTHING GOT FIXED,
YOU KNOW,

JUST LOOKING AT HIM.

HE WORKED OUT ALL
OF HIS PROBLEMS ONSTAGE.

THAT'S WHERE HE TOOK
HIS BEST SELF.

THAT'S WHERE HE TOOK

ALL OF HIS ANGUISH AND FEARS

AND GRIEFS,
AND HE WORKED THEM OUT

WITH AN AUDIENCE--

THAT'S JUST WHO HE WAS--

AND GOT PURIFIED
BY THE END OF THE NIGHT.

SO THAT HAPPENED WITH ME
THAT NIGHT WITH HIM.

IT JUST ALL GOT FIXED.

["WAYFARING STRANGER"
BY JOHNNY CASH PLAYS]

JOHNNY CASH: â I'M JUST
A POOR, WAYFARING STRANGER â

â TRAVELING THROUGH...

NARRATOR: LIKE MANY
FADING COUNTRY STARS,

JOHNNY CASH AND HIS WIFE
JUNE CARTER FOUND THEMSELVES

ENCAMPED IN THE TOURIST TOWN
OF BRANSON, MISSOURI,

WHERE A GROUP OF THEATERS
HAD SPROUTED UP

AND TURNED THE OLD BUSINESS
MODEL OF LIVE PERFORMANCES

ON ITS HEAD.

JOHNNY CASH: " WHICH I GO...

NARRATOR: IT WAS THE AUDIENCE
WHO SHOWED UP IN BIG BUSES.

THE MUSICIANS STAYED
IN ONE PLACE AND GAVE

2 OR 3 SHOWS A DAY...

JOHNNY CASH: " SHE SAID
SHE'D MEET ME... "

NARRATOR: BUT SOME DAYS,
JOHNNY CASH,

THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN ELECTED
TO BOTH THE COUNTRY MUSIC

AND ROCK AND ROLL
HALL OF FAME,

LOOKED OUT
AT THE 2,500-SEAT THEATER,

AND FEWER THAN 200 PEOPLE
WERE THERE.

JOHNNY CASH: " JUST GOING...

RUN-DMC: " IT'S TRICKY TO ROCK
A RHYME, TO ROCK A RHYME "

NARRATOR: THEN IN 1993, A YOUNG
PRODUCER NAMED RICK RUBIN,

WHO HAD HELPED POPULARIZE
HIP HOP MUSIC

AND RECORDED SUCCESSFUL RAP,
PUNK, AND HEAVY METAL ARTISTS,

APPROACHED CASH ABOUT DOING
AN ALBUM FOR HIS LABEL.

MANY OF CASH'S FRIENDS
AND FAMILY WERE AGHAST,

CERTAIN THE COLLABORATION
WOULD BE DAMAGING

TO HIS ALREADY FALTERING CAREER.

HE WENT AHEAD ANYWAY.

JOHN CARTER CASH: AND SO THEY
BEGAN TO FOCUS ON MATERIAL.

EVERYTHING WAS HONESTLY
CONNECTED WITH MY FATHER

AND WHO HE WAS AS A PERSON.

SONGS OF FAITH,
SONGS OF MY DAD'S LOVE

FOR MY MOTHER, SONGS
OF HIS HUMOR;

SONGS OF THE ELEMENTAL DARKNESS
WITHIN HIM.

JOHNNY CASH: "DELIA,
OH, DELIA "

" DELIA ALL MY LIFE

" IF I HADN'T HAD
SHOT POOR DELIA "

" I'D HAVE HAD HER
FOR MY WIFE "

" DELIA'S GONE,
ONE MORE ROUND "

" DELIA'S GONE

" ONE MORE ROUND...

NARRATOR: RELEASED
IN THE SPRING OF 1994,

THE ALBUM "AMERICAN RECORDINGS"
WON RAVE REVIEWS

FOR ITS SPARSE ARRANGEMENTS,
CASH'S STILL-COMMANDING VOICE,

AND HIS SONG CHOICES
FROM A TRADITIONAL COWBOY TUNE

TO COMPOSITIONS
BY TOM WAITS, LEONARD COHEN,

AND KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

AND THE NEARLY CENTURY-OLD
MURDER BALLAD "DELIA'S GONE."

" SHE WAS LOW-DOWN
AND TRIFLING "

â AND SHE WAS COLD AND MEAN...

ROSANNE CASH:
EVERYTHING WAS NEW AGAIN.

HE WAS--HE WAS BACK.

IT WAS LIKE THE LIGHT
SHINED ON HIM AGAIN,

AND HE WAS SO GRATEFUL
AND RELIEVED THAT SOMEBODY

SAW HIS ESSENCE
AND WHO HE WAS

AND JUST WANTED TO
BRING THAT OUT,

JUST WANTED HIM TO BE
JOHNNY CASH AGAIN.

â JAILER, I CAN'T SLEEP
'CAUSE... â

NARRATOR: MOST COUNTRY RADIO
STATIONS IGNORED THE ALBUM,

BUT IT SOLD 150,000 COPIES,
MORE THAN ANY ALBUM

OF HIS SINCE 1971,

AND WON HIM A GRAMMY AWARD
FOR BEST FOLK ALBUM.

TWO YEARS LATER, IN 1996,
CASH AND RUBIN CAME OUT

WITH THE EQUALLY
SUCCESSFUL "UNCHAINED"

WITH MARTY STUART AND TOM PETTY
AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

AS BACKUP MUSICIANS.

THIS TIME, IT WON A GRAMMY
FOR BEST COUNTRY ALBUM.

["HURT" BY JOHNNY CASH PLAYS]

NARRATOR: OVER THE NEXT
SEVERAL YEARS,

EVEN AS HIS HEALTH DETERIORATED

AND HE COULD NO LONGER

MAKE LIVE APPEARANCES,
JOHNNY CASH WOULD RECORD

3 MORE ALBUMS
WITH RICK RUBIN

WITH AN EQUALLY WIDE RANGE
OF SONGS...

JOHNNY CASH: "TO SEE IF
I STILL FEEL..."

NARRATOR: FROM ONES
HE HAD WRITTEN

TO THOSE BY BONO, STING,
LENNON AND MCCARTNEY,

AS WELL AS HANK WILLIAMS
AND THE CARTER FAMILY.

JOHNNY CASH: "THAT'S REAL

" THE NEEDLE...

NARRATOR: BUT WHAT DREW
THE MOST ATTENTION

WAS A SONG CALLED "HURT,"
WRITTEN BY TRENT REZNOR

OF NINE INCH NAILS.

JOHNNY CASH: "STING

" TRY TO KILL IT
ALL AWAY "

" BUT I REMEMBER EVERYTHING

" WHAT HAVE I BECOME

" MY SWEETEST FRIEND?

" EVERYONE I KNOW

" GOES AWAY IN THE END...

NARRATOR: THE ALBUM WOULD
EVENTUALLY SELL

NEARLY 2 MILLION COPIES,
EARN CASH YET ANOTHER GRAMMY,

AND, AS A SIGN THAT

THE COUNTRY MUSIC INDUSTRY

WANTED HIM BACK AS ONE
OF THEIR OWN,

WON THE CMA's AWARD
FOR ALBUM OF THE YEAR.

JOHNNY CASH:
"I WILL MAKE YOU HURT

" IF I COULD START AGAIN

" A MILLION MILES AWAY

" I WILL KEEP MYSELF

" I WOULD FIND A WAY

["WINDING STREAM"
BY BOBBY HORTON PLAYS]

NARRATOR: SHORTLY
AFTER THE SONG'S RELEASE,

JUNE CARTER CASH DIED.

JOHNNY HUNG ON
FOR 4 MONTHS WITHOUT HER.

ROSANNE CASH: IN THE LAST FEW
MONTHS OF HIS LIFE,

IT SEEMS LIKE I SANG A LOT
OF CARTER FAMILY SONGS TO HIM.

UM, IT COMFORTED HIM,

AND I READ THE PSALMS TO HIM.

THE LAST SONG HE HEARD WAS,
UH, "THE WINDING STREAM."

THAT'S WHAT I SANG TO HIM
WHEN HE WAS DYING.

" OH, GIVE TO ME
A WINDING STREAM "

" IT MUST NOT BE TOO WIDE

" WHERE WAVING LEAVES
FROM MAPLE TREES MEET "

" FROM EITHER SIDE

IT WAS JUNE'S

FAVORITE CARTER FAMILY SONG,

AND I JUST LIKED TO SING IT,
AND HE LIKED TO HEAR ME SING IT.

THE CARTER FAMILY SONGS
ON THE RADIO

WHEN HE WAS A KID,
THAT PULLED HIM FORWARD,

AND CARTER FAMILY SONGS
SENT HIM OUT,

SENT HIM AWAY.

â

NARRATOR: JOHNNY CASH DIED
ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2003.

HE WAS 71 YEARS OLD.

HE WAS BURIED NEXT TO JUNE
IN THE MEMORY GARDENS CEMETERY

NEAR THEIR HOME
IN HENDERSONVILLE, TENNESSEE.

LATER, A MEMORIAL CONCERT
WAS STAGED

AT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM
WITH PERFORMANCES

BY A GRAND ARRAY OF STARS.

IT BEGAN, AS HIS MOTHER
WOULD HAVE LIKED,

WITH A GOSPEL SONG, PERFORMED
BY THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS.

MAN: â CAN HOLD MY BODY DOWN

CHOIR: â MY BODY,
HOLD MY BODY DOWN â

NARRATOR: THEN ROSANNE STEPPED
TO THE MICROPHONE

AND SANG "I STILL MISS SOMEONE,"
THIS TIME, ON HER OWN.

â AT MY DOOR,
THE LEAVES ARE FALLING â

[APPLAUSE]

â A COLD, WILD WIND
WILL COME â

â AND SWEETHEARTS WALK
BY TOGETHER â

â 'CAUSE I STILL
MISS SOMEONE â

â I GO OUT ON A PARTY

â AND LOOK
FOR A LITTLE FUN â

â BUT I FIND
A DARKENED CORNER â

â 'CAUSE I STILL
MISS SOMEONE â

TAKE EVERY PIECE
OF AMERICAN MUSIC.

I MEAN, EVERY PIECE
OF THAT STREAM,

ALL THOSE TRIBUTARIES
THAT GO INTO THAT POOL

OF WHATEVER WE CALL IT,
COUNTRY MUSIC, AMERICAN MUSIC,

FROM BLUES, GOSPEL,
BLUEGRASS, ROCK AND ROLL...

ROSEANNE CASH: â AND ALL...

HARRIS: I MEAN, THAT WAS
ALL IN JOHN.

I MEAN, IT WAS ALL IN HIM.

ROSEANNE CASH: â AND I'LL WONDER
IF HE'S SORRY â

â FOR LEAVING
WHAT WE'D BEGUN â

â YEAH, THERE'S SOMEONE
FOR ME SOMEWHERE â

â BUT I STILL
MISS SOMEONE â

â I STILL MISS

â SOMEONE

â

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

["WILL THE CIRCLE BE
UNBROKEN" BY THE NITTY
GRITTY DIRT BAND PLAYS]

MERLE HAGGARD: IT ROSE UP
OUT OF NOTHING,

UNEDUCATED, FROM THE SOUL

AND CAME INTO WHAT IT IS,
WHICH IS PROBABLY

NEVER BEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT
AND THERE WILL NEVER BE

ANYTHING LIKE IT AGAIN.

GIDDENS:
THIS IS OUR VOICE,

AND THIS IS OUR--OUR MUSIC,

TELLING THOSE STORIES
OF THOSE PEOPLE

WHO DON'T HAVE THAT VOICE,

AND THEY HEAR THAT SONG,
AND THEY'RE, LIKE,

YOU KNOW, "THAT'S MY STORY."

JOHNNY CASH: â WHEN I SAW...

NARRATOR: COUNTRY MUSIC IS
A COMPLICATED CHORUS

OF AMERICAN VOICES,
JOINING TOGETHER

TO TELL A COMPLICATED
AMERICAN STORY.

CHORUS: â WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN? â

NARRATOR: IT HAS BEEN
HANDED DOWN

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION,

MOVING FROM FARM FIELDS
AND CHURCHES

AND FAMILY PORCHES
INTO EVERY CORNER

OF THE COUNTRY.

CHORUS: " IN THE SKY

ROY ACUFF: " I SAID
TO THE UNDERTAKER "

" "UNDERTAKER, PLEASE
DRIVE SLOW" "

" "FOR THIS LADY
YOU ARE CARRYING" "

" "LORD, I HATE
TO SEE HER GO" "

NARRATOR: IT HAS CHANGED
AND GROWN AT EVERY TURN,

TETHERED TO ITS PAST

BUT ALWAYS REACHING
TOWARD ITS FUTURE.

SECOR: IT'S ALMOST LIKE IT NEEDS
TO BE EXHUMED

AND NEW LIFE BREATHED INTO IT.

CHORUS: " IN THE SKY

THE PART THAT IS THE SONGS
OF THE PEOPLE,

THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS
OF THE PEOPLE,

THE PAIN AND SUFFERING
OF THE PEOPLE,

THAT NEEDS TO REMAIN EMBEDDED
IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

IF IT ISN'T THERE,
I'M OUT.

SKAGGS: " OH, I FOLLOWED
CLOSE BEHIND HER "

" TRIED TO HOLD UP...

I'M NOT ONE OF THESE
OLD FARTS THAT SAYS,

"HEY, THEY'RE NOT
DOING IT RIGHT

THE WAY THEY USED TO."

AND I SAY, "LOOK. THEY'RE
NOT DOING BRAIN SURGERY

THE WAY THEY USED TO."

THEY USED TO DRILL
A HOLE IN YOUR HEAD

AND LET OUT ALL
THE BAD AIR, YOU KNOW?

CHORUS: "WILL THE CIRCLE...

HALL: I'M NOT MARRIED TO--
IN MY PHILOSOPHY--

TO A CONCRETE COUNTRY MUSIC.

I DON'T THINK
THERE'S ANY SUCH THING.

CHORUS: "THERE'S
A BETTER HOME A-WAITING "

"IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY "

LEVON HELM: "I WENT BACK HOME

"MY HOME WAS LONESOME...

IT'S ALWAYS GOING TO BE
CONNECTED TO THE PAST,

BUT WE DON'T
WANT TO STAY THERE.

"YOU NEVER STEP INTO
THE SAME RIVER TWICE."

MUSIC HAS TO CHANGE, TOO.

HELM AND HARRIS:
"SO SAD AND LONE

CHORUS: "WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN "

â BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY? â

â THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

â

â

NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND:
â OH, WE SANG THE SONGS...

STUART: THERE WILL BE SONGS
THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN HITS

THAT NEVER WERE.

THERE WILL BE SONGS
THAT ARE HITS

THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN.

THERE WILL BE PEOPLE THAT
YOU'LL FALL IN LOVE WITH,

AND THEY'LL BE GONE
IN 3 WEEKS

OR AFTER THE NEXT RECORD.

THEN THERE WILL BE STARS
THAT COME AND GET YOU

INSIDE OF YOUR HEART
AND STAY WITH YOU

FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

CHORUS: â BE UNBROKEN...

STUART: SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY,
YOU'LL DISCOVER

AN OLD COUNTRY SONG
THAT WILL SPEAK

TO THAT DIVORCE YOU'RE
GOING THROUGH

OR THAT TAX PROBLEM
YOU'RE GOING THROUGH

OR YOU LOSING

YOUR BEST FRIEND.

CHORUS: â IN THE SKY,
LORD, IN THE SKY â

STUART: COUNTRY MUSIC HAS
SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY,

AND IT'S INSIDE THE SONGS.

IT'S INSIDE THE LIVES
OF THE CHARACTERS.

IT'S REALLY
COLORFUL IN HERE.

I INVITE YOU IN.

CHORUS: â THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

â WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN â

â BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY? â

â THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING â

JIMMY IBBOTSON: â IN THE

CHORUS: â SKY, LORD

â IN THE SKY

["WILDWOOD FLOWER" BY
MAYBELLE CARTER & THE NITTY
GRITTY DIRT BAND PLAYS]

MAYBELLE CARTER: â OH, I'LL
TWINE WITH MY MINGLES â

â AND WAVING BLACK HAIR

â WITH THE ROSES SO RED

â AND THE LILIES SO FAIR

â AND THE MYRTLES SO BRIGHT

â WITH THE EMERALD DEW

â THE PALE AND THE LEADER

AND EYES LOOK LIKE BLUE

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OH, HE TAUGHT ME
TO LOVE HIM

AND PROMISED TO LOVE

AND TO CHERISH ME
OVER ALL OTHERS ABOVE

HOW MY HEART
IS NOW WONDERING

NO MISERY CAN TELL

HE'S LEFT ME NO WARNING,
NO WORDS OF FAREWELL

OH, HE TAUGHT ME

TO LOVE HIM

AND CALL ME HIS FLOWER

THAT WAS BLOOMING
TO CHEER HIM

THROUGH LIFE'S
DREARY HOUR

OH, I LONG TO SEE HIM
AND REGRET THE DARK HOUR

HE'S GONE AND NEGLECTED
THIS PALE WILDWOOD FLOWER